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# Paths to Liberation

## The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought

*Edited by*
Robert E. Buswell, Jr.
Robert M. Gimello

A Kuroda Institute Book
University of Hawaii Press • Honolulu

92 93 94 95 96 97 5 4 3 2 1

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**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Paths to liberation : the Mārga and its transformations in Buddhist thought / edited by Robert E. Buswell, Robert M. Gimello.
p. cm. — (Studies in East Asian Buddhism ; 7)
Papers presented at a conference held at the University of California, Los Angeles, June 25-30, 1988.
"A Kuroda Institute book."
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-8248-1253-0 (acid-free paper)
1. Spiritual life (Buddhism)—Congresses. 2. Salvation (Buddhism)—Congresses. 3. Enlightenment (Buddhism)—Congresses. I. Buswell, Robert E. II. Gimello, Robert M., 1942- III. Series: Studies in East Asian Buddhism ; no. 7.
BQ4302.P38 1992 91-29277
294.3'422—dc20 CIP

University of Hawaii Press books are printed on acid-free paper and meet the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Council on Library Resources

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# Preface

This volume resulted from a conference on Buddhist soteriology that was held at the University of California, Los Angeles, from June 25–30, 1988. The initial block of funding for the conference was generously offered by the Joint Committee on Chinese Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies/Social Science Research Council, with funds provided by the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. A Large Grant award from the University of California Systemwide Program in Pacific Rim Studies allowed us to expand the size of the conference and include foreign scholars among the participants. Additional funding and administrative help was provided by UCLA's Center for Chinese Studies and its director, Philip Huang, and the Center for Pacific Rim Studies and its director, Lucie Cheng. Finally, a major subvention to cover much of the production costs of the volume was graciously arranged through John Hawkins, the director of UCLA's International Studies and Overseas Programs. The support of all these agencies and individuals is gratefully acknowledged.

Several papers that are not included in this volume were also delivered at the conference, including those by Professors George Bond, Peter Gregory, Han Ki Doo, Alan Sponberg, and Daniel Stevenson. All the participants benefited from the lively and provocative comments of our discussants, Professors Bernard Faure and Lee Yearley of Stanford University and Professor Karl Potter of the University of Washington, Seattle. The conference ran as smoothly as it did thanks to the help of Chi-wah Chan, Ding-hwa Hsieh, and Kyoko Tokuno. Susan Sugar and Roger Hart assisted with preparing the volume for production. Finally, Victoria Scott did her usual superlative job of copyediting the manuscript and Barbara E. Cohen prepared an excellent index. We greatly appreciate the contributions all these people made to the conference and the volume.

# Conventions

Scriptures appearing in the Pali canon are cited according to their standard Pali Text Society editions. Texts from the Chinese Buddhist canon are cited according to standard numbers in the *Taishō* printed edition (abbreviated *T*): *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō,* edited by Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaikyoku (Tokyo: Daizōkyōkai, 1924–1935). Full citations from the *Taishō* canon are given in the following fashion: title and fascicle number (where relevant); *T*[*aishō*]; *Taishō* volume number; page, register (a, b, or c), line number(s). E.g., *Ta-fang-kuang fo hua-yen ching* 23, *T* 9.542c27–543a1. Citations from the *Supplement to the Canon* (*Dai-Nihon Zokuzōkyō* [Kyoto: Zōkyō shoin, 1905–1912]) are listed as follows: title and fascicle number; *ZZ;* series; case; volume; page, column (a, b, c, or d), line number(s). E.g., *Shih-men Hung Chüeh-fan lin-chien lu* 1, ZZ 2b, 21, 4, 303d13. Citations from the Chinese reprints of the *Supplement* give the *HTC (Hsü-tsang ching)* volume, page, and column references.

Buddhist terminology that appears in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* we consider to have entered the English language and leave unitalicized: e.g., sūtra, śāstra, nirvāṇa. For a convenient listing of a hundred such words, see Roger Jackson, "Terms of Sanskrit and Pāli Origin Acceptable as English Words," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 5 (1982): 141–142.

# Introduction

Robert E. Buswell, Jr., and Robert M. Gimello

> Just as the ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt, even so this Teaching and Discipline have but one taste, the taste of liberation.
>
> *Cullavagga* IX.14; *Aṅguttaranikāya,* IV.203; etc.

> If you would seek the truth, keep to the way, for the way is also the truth. It is where you go; it is the means by which you go. The goal and the way thither are the same.
>
> St. Augustine, *In Johannis evangelium, tractatus* XIII.4

## The Importance of Mārga, Both Within and Beyond Buddhism

The comparative or cross-cultural study of religions has long promised to liberate scholars from culture-bound categories, perspectives, and methods. It offers such a variety of traditions, and in them such an abundance of themes, that students of religion need no longer rely exclusively on Western, usually only Judeo-Christian, traditions in establishing the major features of religion or in determining the general rubrics under which religion can and should be studied. Unfortunately, this promise has seldom been fulfilled. It is still all too common to find non-Western religious traditions like Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism treated primarily in terms drawn from the European heritage, such as faith, prayer, myth, ritual, eschatology, deity, and so forth. Certain of these originally Western concepts can be very useful in the study of traditions other than those in which they were generated. Others, although they may first have been noted by scholars familiar with only their Western manifestations, are truly universal. Still others, however, prove often to be quite inappropriate, either because they are so closely tied to substantive Western religious beliefs as to be inextricable therefrom or because, unable to accommodate the full range and particular configuration of themes comprising the non-Western tradition to which they may be applied, they simply leave out or distort too much. The problem is really that of one-sidedness, a failure of mutuality. Where, for example, are the Hindu categories used to illumine Christianity, the Taoist concepts employed in analyzing Judaism, the shamanic themes applied to Islam? No doubt such truly cross-cultural studies of religions have been attempted, but only rarely, and more rarely still in any systematic and sustained way.

The present volume is, among other things, an effort to begin the rectification of this situation. Hoping to address an audience of scholars not only in Buddhist Studies but also in Religious Studies, we have undertaken a manifold investigation of the primary Buddhist concept or category of mārga—"the path." Our purpose is twofold: to clarify the range of the concept's meaning and significance within Buddhism, and to suggest ways in which it might prove useful in the cross-cultural study of religion and in the study of religions other than Buddhism. We suggest not only that mārga is a theme central to the whole of Buddhism, but also that it may have scope and theoretical potential sufficient to allow us eventually to speak—with due caution and proper nuance—of Christian mārga, Jewish mārga, Islamic mārga, and so forth. Perhaps the study of Buddhism may be enlisted to illumine those other traditions in ways in which their own categories alone do not. To this end, we believe a focus on Buddhism is especially appropriate because we think that, as a potentially cross-cultural category for the study of religions, the concept of "the path" has been given in Buddhism an explication more sustained, comprehensive, critical, and sophisticated than that provided by any other single religious tradition. And this we would hold even in comparing Buddhism to other Indian religious traditions that also employ the concept of mārga.[1]

Yet we do not wish to exaggerate this point. The Buddhist or Indian notion of mārga is not completely without parallel in other traditions. For example, a Western concept to which the Buddhist category of "the path" seems at least somewhat analogous is that of "soteriology," meaning the theory of salvation. The equivalence is hardly exact, given the English word's etymological implication of "savior" and the common Christian use of the term to label the study of God's (as distinct from man's) salvific activity.[2] However, no other Western term has suggested itself to us as more analogous, and although we prefer to use the terms "mārga" or "the path," we reserve the right occasionally to use "soteriology" or "soteriological" as we discuss the things that Buddhism has located in the domain of mārga. We claim for this usage the same kind of warrant that Max Weber invoked when he used another originally Christian or theistic term, "theodicy," outside of its native contexts. "Theodicy" originally labeled a branch of theology concerned with "justifying" God over and against such deeply distressing facts as the existence of evil and prevalence of apparently innocent suffering. By judicious expansion of the scope of the term's meaning, Weber made profitable use of it in his study of nontheistic religions, for example, in his analysis of the doctrine of karma in Buddhism and in certain kinds of Hinduism.

"Soteriology" may have a similar measure of pliancy and comparative utility. Thus, in any cases in which a Western term for mārga or the

theory of mārga is deemed necessary, we recommend this one.[3] However, just as the term "theodicy" did not replace "karma" even in Weber's own work, so "soteriology" does not replace "mārga." Rather, both Western terms should be used only as fulcrums for initiating certain kinds of comparisons among traditions. In the case of soteriology, we would further urge that once such comparisons have gotten underway, it is preferable to use only the Sanskrit term or its literal English translation as often as possible.

In this volume, what we mean by mārga theory, or by "soteriology" in the Buddhist sense, is, generally speaking, the theory according to which certain methods of practice, certain prescribed patterns of religious behavior, have transformative power and will lead, somehow necessarily, to specific religious goals. While it is certainly true that some form of the transformative power of religious practice—its capacity to alter character, values, or worldviews, and, most important, its capacity to effect the ultimate transformation of salvation—is recognized at least implicitly in all religions, nowhere is this recognition given clearer expression, greater emphasis, or more sustained exposition than in Buddhism.

Throughout the two-and-a-half millennia of its pan-Asian career, Buddhism has been consistently explicit in declaring itself to be, above all else, a soteriology, a method of salvation, rather than, say, a creed. Its unflagging concentration on "the path," whether for the purpose of advocating and charting that path or for the purpose of qualifying and criticizing it, has not only led to the careful and detailed delineation of numerous curricula of religious practice and to the privileging of such delineation over other modes of Buddhist discourse. It has also fostered the adoption, as governing principles of thought and discourse, of just those presuppositions that would best secure the primacy of soteriology or "path theory" over other religious concerns such as gnosiology. An example is Buddhism's relatively consistent adherence to the principle of spiritual pragmatism according to which the truth of a religious proposition consists in its practical utility rather than in its descriptive power. Moreover, Buddhism has been, on the whole, rather less troubled than most theistic religions with such doubts about the efficacy of mārga as might be occasioned by the belief that only God can effect salvation. This is one of the points Buddhism makes in its stress on self-reliance, that is, in its fidelity to Śākyamuni's final injunction to his disciples, as recounted in the early canon, that they "work out their own salvations with diligence."[4] There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, the most notable of which is Pure Land Buddhism. Nevertheless, the theme of self-reliance and the intrinsic efficacy of mārga generally dominates the whole of Buddhism and leads it to privilege mārga in ways that other traditions do not. Thus many of the most characteristic fea-

tures of Buddhism appear to derive from its emphasis on mārga and soteriology.

Consider the recurrence throughout the tradition of the motif of the Buddha as "physician" or therapist rather than theorist. This imagery is more than accidentally congruous with Buddhism's repeated assertion of the superiority of analytical and critical thought over synthetic or constructive speculation. Hence the Buddha is said to have identified himself as an "analyzer" *(vibhajyavādin)* rather than as a "dogmatist" or someone who makes categorical assertions *(ekāṃśavādin)*.[5] This reasoning seems also to justify the characteristically Buddhist invocation of pragmatic criteria for the evaluation of doctrines and practices. Buddhism even goes so far as to formalize its spiritual pragmatism by giving it systematic or meta-theoretical expression as the principle of upāya (expedience). According to this principle, resonant throughout the worlds of Buddhist thought and practice, the chief measure of a teaching's truth or value is its efficacy unto religious ends, rather than any correspondence to the facts. It is not unexpected, therefore, that Buddhists should regularly choose disciplined experience (e.g., meditation) over reason, revelation, and authority as the final arbiter of religious truth or efficacy. All these things and more, we would suggest, flow from the primacy of mārga and soteriology among all the components of Buddhism.

The importance Buddhists assign to systematic discourse about "the path" has general implications that could be valuable in the study of other religions, or of religion generally. A case in point is the longstanding tendency within religious studies to focus interpretive attention on doctrines, i.e., on certain cardinal concepts or model propositions to which adherents of particular traditions are believed to give their intellectual assent. This approach has its uses, but it is also fraught with perils. All too easily can it lead to purely abstract, reified, and fragmented conceptions of religions in which excessive emphasis is given to the élite and disembodied religion of the philosopher or the intellectual. The assumption here seems to be that the identity of any religion can be reduced to its dogmatics, that its doctrines somehow comprise its quintessence. The problem with this approach is that religions are much more than just systems of doctrine, although they do harbor doctrines and often assign them crucially important roles. Religions are also, and perhaps most fundamentally, patterns of action based on axiologies that are as often tacit as they are explicit. As such, religions are embodied in complex ways of life. In some cases these are spelled out in meticulous and explicit detail; in other cases they seem to defy precise and definitive codification; but in no case are they exhausted by the abstract principles or general laws said to underly them.

Moreover, it is such systems of practice and performance, as distinct

from systems of concept and idea, which are most immediately and intimately familiar to the ordinary adherents of a religion. The truths of a religion are revealed to most of its followers not so much by its doctrines as by the patterns described in the life stories of its ideal practitioners, or by the structured experiences of its clerical and lay communities. In the case of Buddhism, even the most unsophisticated of monks or nuns (who may be quite innocent of basic doctrinal formulae like the twelve-linked chain of dependent origination, not to mention subtler doctrines like emptiness) know intimately the monastic regimen they follow each day, and that regimen informs their religious self-understanding every bit as profoundly as subtleties of doctrine may inform the lives of Buddhist intellectuals.

Now monastic discipline is a kind, or a component, of mārga. The experiences and convictions it fosters in the lives of particular monastics may not immediately yield, or give clearest voice to, the essential propositions of Buddhist thought. Such experiences do not translate easily into doctrine. Thus it is hard to descry, say, the "dependent origination of all things" in the rules of monastic life. Nevertheless, *pratītyasamutpāda* and the other seeming rarefactions of Buddhist thought do lurk in those rules, at least by way of implication, and what those rules may lack in philosophical articulation they more than compensate for with their greater accessibility and practicality. Consider, for example, how poverty and mendicancy can serve as exercises in selflessness or as performances, rather than mere conceptualizations, of *anātman*. One might argue that when it comes to doctrine one ought to seek explicitness and rigorous precision. Yet clarity and definition are often purchased at the expense of nuance and universal availability, and there may well be aspects of the "dependent origination of all things" that escape even the most deft of the cerebrations by which that doctrine is usually expressed. Just such nuances of meaning may be directly ascertainable in the structured immediacy of monastic life, and there are many more Buddhists capable of the rigors of the Vinaya than of mastering, say, Nāgārjuna's negative dialectic.

What can be said of Vinaya in this regard seems also to apply to other dimensions of mārga, such as meditation. In Buddhism, the practitioner of meditation is usually thought likely to have a purchase on basic Buddhist truths actually superior to that of any expert in doctrine who is not also well practiced in meditation. Likewise, Buddhists are taught to be especially alert to the power of doctrine and reflection to distract from, or even to prevent, liberating experience. In the famous simile of the raft, for example, the Buddha makes the point that, after using the makeshift raft of dharma to ferry himself across to the other shore of nirvāṇa, the adept would certainly not put the raft on top of his head and carry it off; rather, since the raft had now served its purpose, it should be abandoned

on the beach. And just as the raft of dharma was to be used for crossing over, and was not to be retained, so should the adept eventually abandon even right mental objects (such as the desire for calm and insight), let alone wrong ones.[6] As several chapters in this volume demonstrate, such warnings are especially characteristic of Zen, but Zen abjurations of doctrine may be seen simply as particularly strong or blunt expressions of a belief held generally throughout Buddhism.

It is this sort of existential or experiential embodiment of Buddhist truth—a dimension of Buddhism often ignored in the pursuit of clearly expressible Buddhist ideas and arguments—that we wish to draw into the center of the study of Buddhism. This is what we have in mind when we propose that mārga, as the living context within which all Buddhist truth is tacitly but perhaps most effectively defined, creates a commonality of ultimate concerns that reticulates all the various strands of its religious endeavor[7]—its moral values, ritual observances, theoretical doctrines, and contemplative exercises—to form a complex but unified network of practices tending to liberation.

Related to this, and also recommending mārga as a valuable focus of study, is the way in which it incorporates, underlies, or presupposes everything else in Buddhism, from the simplest act of charity to the most refined meditative experience and the most rigorous philosophical argument. The study of mārga directs attention not to the isolated effects of specific religious practices but to a general pattern of discipline encompassing both the whole life of the individual adherent and the corporate life of the whole Buddhist community. A specific illustration of mārga's function as the ordering mechanism, tenor, or "deep structure" of the Buddhist religion is appropriate at this point.

Consider one of the earliest and simplest statements of the Buddhist path, the so-called "three trainings" *(trīṇi śikṣāṇi)*. In this scheme, the practitioner is instructed to begin pursuit of liberation by cultivating *śīla,* the obedience to basic moral rules (nonviolence, avoidance of false speech, etc.) that comprises the first training. These rules restrict human physical, verbal, and mental activity to actions that are effective for liberation. The rationale for such ethical discipline at the outset and foundation of the path is that morality minimizes present mental anguish, guilt, and uncertainty, thereby engendering the more rudimentary forms of tranquillity, which form the basis of meditation or higher tranquillity *(śamatha)*. But according to this rationale, tranquillity is no mere abstraction, nor is it an ideal goal divorced from actual practice (in this case, the fundamental practice of morality). Rather, it is something concrete, a pattern of experience embodied in the practitioner's ethical observances.

The control over responses to external stimuli that the student gains through moral observance, and the measure of tranquillity that moral-

ity allows, lead to the development of introspection. This then facilitates control over precisely those mental, psychic, and somatic impulses that initiate action in the first place. Such internal control further allows the practitioner to regulate the subtler activities of the mind, permitting still finer mental focus and greater concentration. In fact, it makes possible the growth of higher levels of concentration *(samādhi),* the second of the three trainings, which in turn liberates the student to investigate the world and the "self" in the exercise of discernment *(vipaśyanā).* The insight *(prajñā)* achieved through such investigation (i.e., the third of the three trainings) reveals the nature of the world to be impermanent *(anitya),* unsatisfactory *(duḥkha),* and insubstantial *(anātman),* thus confirming the fundamental Buddhist doctrine of the "three marks of existence" *(trilakṣaṇa).* Finally, such insight brings to an end the impulses that sustain one's ties to the phenomenal world of suffering and so engenders the radical renunciation that is nirvāṇa.

In this example we see that the program of practice outlined in the three modes of training corroborates the most basic doctrinal teachings of Buddhism by bringing them into the whole pattern of discipline comprising the individual's spiritual career. The path thus weaves all these different facets and stages of Buddhist effort into an organic whole, each single part of which incorporates all the other parts. Morality is shown to be the premonition of both concentration and insight; concentration is shown to be the resonance of morality and the anticipation of insight; and insight itself is shown to be both the consummation of morality and concentration and the initiation into liberation.

Similar programs for the integration of doctrine and experience into coherent patterns of practice are available in other formulations of mārga. Some seem designed actually to be followed by real practitioners; others appear to be merely inspirational in intention, mārgas of myth in which the path is presented as one or another kind of heroic quest. The following are only a few of the best known mārga schemes. They are listed here merely to give a general impression of their scope and complexity; limitations of space prevent our glossing them, much less discussing them in detail.[8]

A. The noble eightfold path *(ārya-aṣṭāṅga-mārga)*

1. *samyagdṛṣṭi* (right view)
2. *samyaksaṃkalpa* (right intention)
3. *samyagvāk* (right speech)
4. *samyakkarmānta* (right conduct)
5. *samyagājīva* (right livelihood)
6. *samyagvyāyāma* (right effort)
7. *samyaksmṛti* (right mindfulness)
8. *samyaksamādhi* (right concentration)

B. The four approaches *(catvāraḥ pratipannāḥ)* or four fruits *(catvāri phalāni)*
   1. *śrotāpanna* (stream-winner)
   2. *sakṛdāgāmin* (once-returner)
   3. *anāgāmin* (non-returner)
   4. *arhat* (liberated saint)

C. The thirty-seven factors of awakening *(saptatriṃśad bodhipakṣikā dharmāḥ)*
   1–4. *catvāri-smṛtyupasthānāni* (the four foundations of mindfulness)
   5–8. *catvāri-samyakprahānāni* (the four right exertions)
   9–12. *catvāra-ṛddhipādāḥ* (the four requisites of preternatural power)
   13–17. *pañca-indriyāṇi* (the five faculties)
   18–22. *pañca-balāni* (the five powers)
   23–30. *sapta-bodhyaṅgāni* (the seven limbs of awakening)
   31–37. *ārya-aṣṭāṅga-mārga* (the noble eightfold path)

D. The five paths
   1. *saṃbhāramārga* (path of equipment)
   2. *prayogamārga* (path of preparation)
   3. *darśanamārga* (path of seeing)
   4. *bhāvanāmārga* (path of cultivation)
   5. *niṣṭhāmārga* (path of completion) or *aśaikṣamārga* (path beyond instruction)

E. The six or ten stages or "grounds" *(bhūmi)* of the bodhisattva's career (as listed in the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra;* usually coordinated, in sequence, with the ten perfections listed below)
   1. *pramuditā-bhūmi* (stage of joy)
   2. *vimalā-bhūmi* (stage of immaculacy)
   3. *prabhākarī-bhūmi* (stage of splendor)
   4. *arciṣmatī-bhūmi* (stage of brilliance)
   5. *sudurjāya-bhūmi* (stage of invincibility)
   6. *abhimukhī-bhūmi* (stage of immediacy)
   7. *dūraṅgamā-bhūmi* (stage of transcendence)
   8. *acalā-bhūmi* (stage of immovability)
   9. *sādhumatī-bhūmi* (stage of eminence)
   10. *dharmameghā-bhūmi* (dharma-cloud stage)

F. The six or ten perfections *(pāramitā)*
   1. *dāna-pāramitā* (perfection of giving or charity)
   2. *śīla-pāramitā* (perfection of morality)

3. *kṣānti-pāramitā* (perfection of forebearance or patience)
4. *vīrya-pāramitā* (perfection of energy or vigor)
5. *dhyāna-pāramitā* (perfection of meditation)
6. *prajñā-pāramitā* (perfection of insight)
7. *upāya-pāramitā* (perfection of expedient means)
8. *praṇidhāna-pāramitā* (perfection of resolve or vow)
9. *bala-pāramitā* (perfection of strength)
10. *jñāna-pāramitā* (perfection of knowledge)

G. The bodhisattva path in fifty-three stages according to the Hua-yen tradition
- 1–10. the ten faiths (Ch. *hsin*, J. *shin*)
- 11–20. the ten abodes *(chu, jū)*
- 21–30. the ten practices *(hsing, gyō)*
- 31–40. the ten dedications *(hui-hsiang, ekō)*
- 41–50. the ten stages (*ti, ji*—see "E" above)
- 51. virtual awakening *(teng-chüeh, tōgaku)*
- 52. wondrous awakening *(miao-chüeh, myōkaku)*
- 53. buddhahood *(fo, butsu)*

H. The "five ranks" (Ch. *wu-wei*, J. *goi*) of the Ts'ao-tung (J. Sōtō) tradition of Ch'an or Zen (variously named)
1. attaining the relative within the absolute *(cheng-chung-pien, shōchūhen)*
2. attaining the absolute within the relative *(pien-chung-cheng, henchūshō)*
3. emerging from the absolute *(cheng-chung-lai, shōchūrai)*
4. access at once to both the relative and the absolute *(chien-chung-chih, kenchūshi)*
5. simultaneous integration of the absolute and the relative *(chien-chung-tao, kenchūtō)*

Of course, as this list might lead one to expect, the essays comprising this volume do not exhaust the vast and intricate topic of Buddhist mārga. Nor do they enumerate all of its major dimensions. They do, however, touch on several of its more important implications, while highlighting some of the key tensions and debates that have arisen in the history of Buddhist discourse on the subject. It would be well, then, to note several of those implications and tensions in advance. We do so in the conviction that the purposes of an introduction to a collection so various as this are better served by such thematic discussions, incomplete though they inevitably be, than by a preliminary summary of the chapters to follow.

## Mārga and the Ideal Person: The Path as a Design for the Universalization of Individual Experience

The emphasis we find throughout Buddhism on the practical needs of the person engaged in religious training seems to have been one source of the profusion of mārga schemes that characterizes the tradition. The notion of "the path" is a valid model for religious endeavor in Buddhism only insofar as it poses a destination to be reached, and only to the extent that someone actively pursues that destination. The claim that it was by their own personal efforts that the Buddha and his disciples achieved enlightenment is one of the fundamental assumptions from which all Buddhist soteriological speculation derives. And yet, based on that very same assumption, the path is often taken out of the realm of the practical and the immediate and exalted to the status of a dramatization, or mythic recapitulation, of the process by which such ideal persons are said to have achieved enlightenment. In some cases, therefore, mārga discourse seems to function in Buddhism less as a practical guide and more in the way that ritual and sacrament function in other traditions. That is to say, rehearsal of mārga may occasionally verge on ceremonial reenactment, in historical and mundane time, of the primal religious experiences achieved *in illo tempore* by the tradition's inaugural figures. It may even be seen as somehow allowing the actual reconstitution or repossession of that original, timeless, time.

This, in turn, fosters a concern in mārga literature with the ideal figure as the embodiment and proof of mārga, an emphasis counterbalancing the impersonal, "objective" tone of so much of the rest of mārga discourse. Indeed, it is clear in the earliest phases of Buddhist soteriological inquiry, and remains clear throughout the history of the tradition, that for all their tendency toward impersonal discourse (as in the Abhidharma traditions), Buddhists had great difficulty conceiving of "the path" in purely theoretical and generic terms, apart from ideal images of persons who either had traversed it or were thought capable of doing so. This helps account for the meticulous care some Buddhists thinkers have taken in arguing about the qualities of the enlightened beings. The issue of whether arhats are ignorant and only buddhas can be said to be omniscient, discussed expertly by Padmanabh Jaini in his contribution to this volume, is a case in point. Such questions about the nature of ideal beings, though they may seem to us far removed from any conceivable practical concern and so may appear to be mere idle speculation, actually do have a practical relevance insofar as they bear on questions of the sacral efficacy of mārga. They provide reasons either to believe or to doubt the claim that mārga allows the full recapitulation of primal sacred or liberating events.

Likewise, the goal of the path, as much as the path itself, is often

defined in terms of differences between the ideal person, who has completed the journey and thus become worthy of emulation, and the less-than-ideal person, who is still in transit. As Grace Burford shows in her chapter, early Buddhists often defined both path and goal explicitly in terms of the ideal person, and when such personalized definitions were challenged by impersonal or depersonalized alternative definitions, the personalized accounts often prevailed.

From this premise further hypotheses seem to follow. It may well be that the persistent Buddhist tendency to elaborate on the path by dividing it into multiple and further subdivisible stages, although perhaps begun as a kind of "cartography" of the terrain of Buddhist religious experience, led retrospectively to creation of a spiritual pedigree for the ideal person such as might render that person worthy of emulation by others. Thus the process of mārga construction, whereby the path is built step by step, may be said to define a necessary stage in the evolution of a tradition, viz., the stage of transition from the category of the particular, the idiosyncratic, or the biographical to the category of the universal and the generic. In this way the experience of one person is made accessible, in principle, to all. By organizing experience into sequences of stages, the transcendent goal presumed to have been achieved by spiritual exemplars at the source of the tradition is objectified, codified, and made available to ordinary Buddhist practitioners. The detailed ordering of experience that these schemata of the path provide offers practitioners an explicit guide to achieving the original and archetypal goal for themselves. The path thus mediates between the enlightened and the unenlightened.

This bears on the question of whether mārga is descriptive or prescriptive. We know that some of the elaborate master-student genealogies created, for example, by the Ch'an and Tibetan Buddhist traditions as accounts of their own histories have only the most tenuous basis in historical fact. Their true purpose has been to shape the future rather than recount the past. So, too, the various stages outlined in highly schematized versions of mārga may have no direct connection with any real problems or experiences in the lives of real persons. They may apply only analogically and normatively, prompting students to mold their own life experiences according to the ideals of their religious heritage. Or they may be means by which individual experience can be made communal, to the extent that common prescriptions of practice may foster experiences similar to those of one's colleagues. Thus rather than only "mediate" Buddhist mystical experiences, as has sometimes been suggested, mārga schemes may actually shape those experiences, and also provide the means by which they may be shared.

Even in Tibet and East Asia, where the mārga received extensive scholastic exegesis, we see the persistence of Buddhism's earliest focus

on the idealized person. Jeffrey Hopkins shows in his chapter that Tibetan exegetes continued to conflate the person with the path. In China, in that quintessentially Chinese soteriology which John McRae here studies under the label of "Ch'an encounter dialogue," Buddhist training culminates not in some abstract goal but in the formation of an idealized person, the enlightened Ch'an master. McRae describes classical Ch'an as a performative soteriology in which the archetypal drama of the practitioner's approach to, and realization of, salvation is reenacted through the medium of the dramatic and dialectical encounter. For the student, salvation is defined as the ability to act as an enlightened Ch'an master is thought to act. Notions of a chartable path and of progressive achievement by differentiable stages need not intrude upon Ch'an soteriology: the student confirms his enlightenment through his direct interactions with the idealized person. Such an interpretation, McRae suggests, implies a subitist soteriology, for there can be no intermediary stages in becoming a master or a patriarch—either one is such, or one is not. Ch'an soteriology also implies a view of Buddhist practice in which the community and the lineage of practitioners play especially important roles, thereby establishing a contrast with the stress on doctrinal exegesis and explication of theoretical issues that seems paramount in other indigenous schools of Chinese Buddhism, like Hua-yen. On this point, and on the larger issue of the tension between doctrine and meditative practice as a factor in the growth of Chinese Buddhism, Yoshizu Yoshihide has much to say in his chapter.

## Inverse Mārga: The Path in Terms of Its Obstacles

Such conflation of practitioner and goal contributes to the decidedly pragmatic tenor of much Buddhist soteriological writing, and to the characteristically Buddhist concern to identify and distinguish the defilements by which persons fall short of the ideal, so as to explain the causes producing those defilements while also prescribing antidotes to them. Such interest in the defilements and their eradication is seen in mārga schemes ranging from the Indian Vaibhāṣika to the Chinese T'ien-t'ai and the Tibetan Dge-lugs-pa. In these systems, unlike Ch'an, we see a shift in soteriological emphasis away from the idealized person to the abstract qualities associated with the path.

Describing the various stages of the path in terms of the defilements destroyed by each stage thus became a major preoccupation of many traditions of Buddhist soteriological writing. This interest sometimes evolved into concern with wide ranges of conatively negative qualities, including *kleśa* (defilements), *āsrava* (fluxes), *anuśaya* (contaminants), *saṃyojana* (fetters), and so forth. Progress on the path came to be defined by some specifically in terms of the successive abandonment of defile-

ments. The goal of practice was not some transcendent, experiential state but gradual separation from specific defilements, one after the other. This is what Collett Cox shows in her chapter on the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas. The disposition to "abandon" particular defilements served as the principle of continuity underlying the elaborate mārga schemes of those schools. By framing the path negatively in this manner, these traditions could define the goal privatively, as what is left once those defilements are abandoned. This helped Buddhists resist the temptation to conceptualize a state understood in their heart of hearts to be fundamentally nonconceptual. Such concern with defilements is what allows soteriologies with universalist claims to maintain hierarchies among practitioners. Thus the Tibetan formulations of mārga covered by Hopkins are arranged according to the various sorts of practices assigned to different types of beings.

## Mārga as a Path of Knowledge versus Mārga as a Path of Purification

Many Buddhist mārga schemes arose from attempts to resolve a fundamental tension in Buddhism, and indeed in much of Indian religion, between the impulse toward knowledge and the drive to purification, these two being the counteragents, respectively, to ignorance and impurity. This polarity is adumbrated even in the two distinct soteriologies presented, as Burford shows, in one of the earliest of all Buddhist texts, the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. One of these is a purificatory system concerned with developing specific ethical virtues that were thought capable of destroying—incinerating, as it were—the various defilements. The other is an approach via insight or analysis that denies the value of reliance on any and all speculative views and so subjects defilements not so much to destruction as to epistemological sublation. The tension between these two methods remained unresolved in that early text and reemerged frequently in later Buddhist writings. As Cox suggests in her chapter, the distinction is rather more than that commonly drawn between rationality and mysticism. The Vaibhāṣikas, and later the Mahāyāna Buddhists of Yogācāra tendency, addressed this tension by developing a bipartite mārga that divided the path into two broad categories—*darśana* (insight) and *bhāvanā* (cultivation). The Vaibhāṣikas, characteristically, defined the defilements abandoned on the mārga in terms of those factitious dharmas—mistakes of understanding, really—that are removed by insight (the *avastukakleśa* of individuality, attachment to rites and rituals as a means of salvation, skepsis, etc.) and those real dharmas (such as greed, ill-will, and conceit) that must be removed, purged, or consumed by a persistent intensity of cultivation. Rather than resolve this tension, the bipartite mārga seeks to mediate between the path of purification

through cultivation and that of sublation through analytical vision, acknowledging the soteriological efficacy of both.

This bifurcation of a path of knowledge which nullifies error and a path of purification which burns up defilement may have been the principal catalyst in the production of the Buddhist mārga as a diversity rather than a uniformity of disciplines. Thus at least two generic forms of mārga, and many subsidiary forms, seem to emerge in the different traditions of Buddhism represented in this volume: an approach concerned with mental purification (as in Theravāda and Vaibhāṣika) and an approach based on a direct, analytic vision of truth (as in Ch'an and Zen). As an indication of how sharp the difference between the two can be, consider the contrast between two attitudes toward the virtue or perfection of giving *(dāna)* fostered by Ch'an, a way of knowledge *par excellence,* and by the Abhidharma tradition, mother to all purificatory paths. For Ch'an we can let its putative founder, Bodhidharma, speak in his legendary role as the scourge of conventional piety. Few tales are better remembered in Ch'an than Bodhidharma's devastating verdict on the prodigious generosity of King Wu of the Liang dynasty: there was "no merit in it at all," he said, ruthlessly. And yet, as Robert Buswell shows in his essay on the eradication and restoration of wholesome roots in Abhidharma, Buddhists have also seen *dāna* as the ultimate foundation of mārga. It may be that no mere making of "merit" *(puṇya),* not even the merit of giving, can by itself accomplish liberation, but such moral effort—and perhaps it alone—can plant the deepest of "good roots" *(kuśalamūla),* out of which later progress toward liberation grows.

Even in one of the latest works treated in this volume, the thirteenth-century *Zazen ron* studied by Carl Bielefeldt, Buddhist practice is divided between the gradual accumulation of wholesome karmic effect and the Zen way of "becoming a buddha by seeing one's own nature." The polarity between these two broad approaches, sometimes even the paradoxical amalgamation of the two, both characterizes and vivifies, in one way or another, most of the treatments of soteriology considered in these pages. The matter can become even more complex, as when moderate forms of Ch'an are differentiated from extreme varieties according to the degree to which they preserve elements of the gradual purificatory path, deeming them necessary complements to the sudden analytical vision. This last is a theme touched on in Robert Gimello's contribution to the volume.

Two features in particular seem to be common to the progressive and purificatory visions of the path. These are both foreshadowed in the ancient and oft-repeated synopsis of the Buddha's teaching: "Avoidance of all evil,/Cultivation of the good,/Purification of one's mind,/This is the teaching of the Buddha."[9] On the one hand, traversing the mārga involves a gradual removal of various types of defilements, and this

frames the soteriological process in essentially negative or privative terms. On the other hand, progress involves the cultivation of a full range of positive moral and psychological qualities as well. At the consummation of both these endeavors, mental purity is achieved, enlightenment realized, and salvation won. Even in the context of the mārga schemes of later Tibetan Buddhism, as Hopkins' analysis shows, the path involves a tension between withdrawal from negative phenomena and expansion of positive commitments. In his comments made during the conference that produced this volume, Bernard Faure referred to Bergson's idea of "twofold frenzy" *(loi de double frénésie),* in which two related views tend to dissociate and run to their own logical conclusions, producing a creative dichotomy that widens the range of discourse between extremes.[10] The multiplication of stages in scholastic discussions of mārga may have been made possible by opening up this expansive middle ground between ignorance and enlightenment. And as Donald Lopez explains in his chapter, once the mārga was so expanded, its terminus could be found to be so far in the future as to render saṃsāra—and practice of the path—virtually endless.

Of the "direct" path or paths of knowledge, by contrast, at least three different interpretations or interpretive metaphors seem possible. First, there is the view that the true path is a telescoping or a condensation of the total mārga into a single moment, a moment in which all the stages of the path are consummated simultaneously. Second, there is the conception of the direct path as a transcendence—or, in the Chinese phrasing, a "leaping over" *(ch'ao-yüeh)*—of all intermediary stages.[11] Finally, there is simply the progressive path as seen from the point of view of its consummation, a perspective that ignores all the prior progressive development of the mind. The Korean Sŏn/Hwaŏm syncretist Chinul (1158–1210), for example, held that sudden approaches consummate instantaneously all the experiences achieved in following the gradual path. He believed that the sudden approach of Sŏn (Ch'an) subsumes in a single moment of experience the complex, progressive mārga of Hwaŏm (Hua-yen) and so perfects instantly all the various qualities differentiated in Hwaŏm thought. Chinul accepted the need for the varieties of achievement thought to be sequentially possible in the course of mārga, but he sought to compress the whole process of development into the shortest possible period of time, even to the point of making it virtually instantaneous.[12]

In his chapter on Kamakura Zen, Bielefeldt likewise notes that subitism involves a "conflation of cause and effect" in which there is a "collapsing of the path and its fruit." Analogously, the Japanese Tendai tradition is shown by Paul Groner in his contribution to have sought to bring the realization of buddhahood down to lower levels of the path, so as to make the fruition of the path directly accessible even to ordinary

folk just starting out in their practice. The Chinese Ch'an master Ta-hui Tsung-kao's (1089–1163) interpretation of the "shortcut" approach of Ch'an suggests instead that the path of knowledge is more a transcendence of stages than it is their compression. Finally, Tsung-mi's (780–841) interpretation of the radical subitism he saw as rife in the Ch'an of his day implies the third interpretive possibility, viz., that what is called "sudden awakening/sudden cultivation" is simply "sudden awakening/gradual cultivation viewed from the standpoint of this final lifetime," regardless of the many past lives of religious development that preceded it.[13]

Tsung-mi's argument, brought from China to Korea in the twelfth century, continues to be a focus of urgent controversy even today. There is ongoing now in Korea a rather strenuous and quite serious debate between, on the one hand, representatives of Tsung-mi's and Chinul's moderate and balanced amalgamation of what we are here calling the sudden path of knowledge and the gradual path of purification and, on the other hand, spokesmen for the more radical Lin-chi tradition, which seems entirely committed to the all-at-once path of knowledge (as embodied, for example, in *k'an-hua* or *kōan* practice).[14] In this debate the subitists adduce two kinds of arguments very much like those Bielefeldt discovered in the subitist soteriologies of medieval Japanese Zen: first, the reduction of all spiritual experience to the single transformative vision of the enlightened mind and, second, the inflation of practice so that all action becomes the spontaneous expression of this mind. Bielefeldt traces the sectarian splits in Japanese Zen and Chinese Ch'an to the tension created by this polarity, and we learn from contemporary Korean Buddhism that the polarity is still highly charged.

A similar tension is found in the history of later Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, where Vajrayāna was seen to threaten conventional views of mārga progression in much the same way that radical Ch'an or Zen did in East Asia. This is the subject of Matthew Kapstein's essay on "the illusion of spiritual progress." Drawing on (and translating parts of) a rare document written by the Indian female adept Niguma, Kapstein notes that, as a kind of shamaness as well as a tantrika, Niguma was able both to undercut or dissolve and also to reaffirm the traditional mārga categories by subsuming them all under the rubric of "apparition."

Attempts of a different sort to synthesize progressive and subitist programs of Buddhist soteriology occur in several scholastic traditions as well. The Chinese T'ien-t'ai school was born in one such effort. As Daniel Stevenson noted in his contribution to the conference from which this book derives,[15] T'ien-t'ai seeks to incorporate the direct approach into a broader progressive program of spiritual development. Such a synthesis was required because of the change in ontology

prompted by the adaptation of Buddhism to the new Chinese worldview. Indeed, the system of Chih-i, founder of T'ien-t'ai, can be seen as a "sinicization" of Buddhist soteriology, i.e., as a new outline of spiritual development especially suited to the Chinese predilection for harmony and integration. Chih-i sought to develop a subitist soteriology that could operate within the confines of gradualist paradigms inherited from India. His "sudden and complete" approach embodied a soteriology in which a fundamentally stageless process was nevertheless stratified into several stages of spiritual development. This paradoxical synthesis was justified by the claim that progress did not consist in the sequential perfection of specific virtues, as the Indian mārga format suggested, but was instead, in Stevenson's words, "the incremental intensification of a singular vision of reality."

The purpose behind such a system was not merely to synthesize the variant systems presented in Indian texts but also to counter radically subitist perspectives, which Chih-i felt could foster attachment to one technique of praxis as superior to all others. This, it will be recalled from Burford's chapter, is a criticism implicit also in the anti-*diṭṭhi* polemic of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. The same criticism also lurks in the "no-mind" of Ch'an, which Bielefeldt sees as "a refraining from judgment." In attempting to prescribe one soteriological technique for everyone, subitism can fail to recognize or appreciate the differences in people's spiritual capacities and the changing circumstances of practice. If one were to take it to its logical extreme, as some Ch'an schools eventually did, subitism could also lead to antinomianism, the implicit rationale being that there is no particular form of practice that can be judged necessary to the achievement of nirvāṇa. This threat of antinomianism is considered in both Gimello's and Bielefeldt's essays below.

## Mārga and Scholasticism

The proliferation of vast numbers of negative and positive qualities, seen as either to be shed or to be acquired in traversing the path, engendered a concern among Buddhist exegetes for order and intellectual consistency. The desire for coherence and elegance within the vast array of Buddhist spiritual technologies is certainly one reason for the corresponding proliferation of stages and grounds in systematizations of the mārga, like those found in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* or Asaṅga's *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra*. Buddhists sometimes approached this task of organizing the path with methodical zeal, inflating it into a multitude of specific stages. Yoshizu's chapter shows that they did this with particular vigor in medieval China. In the syncretic Hua-yen mārga scheme, for example, as many as fifty-two or fifty-three stages were stipulated, the first fifty of which are arranged in a series of five groups comprising ten

steps each. While the notion of stages in spiritual evolution is not unknown in Western Christian thought, at least since the writings of the Psuedo-Dionysius in the sixth century, Christians typically did not claim that God comes to be known through any expenditure of human effort in traversing a path; rather, it is God who is believed to reveal himself to us. Thus the negative theology privileged in Thomism explicitly holds that if we were to rely only on our own efforts, we would never know what God is; the best we could do is discover something of what God is not.[16] As a rule, Buddhism is rather more ambivalent on the question of whether the path serves as a necessary or only a contributory cause of the experience of enlightenment. At certain times, mārga and the human effort expended in traversing it are held to be both necessary and sufficient unto liberation, but at other times (as when the unconditioned character of liberation is stressed), the goal can be made to seem quite beyond the reach of path or deliberate effort, as though it were somehow gratuitous or self-generating. The latter, of course, is puzzling in a nontheistic tradition like Buddhism.

Buddhist soteriological systems and the speculative philosophies of medieval Christianity share similar concerns with intellectual consistency and systematicity. Western thinkers of the Middle Ages sought to apply the logic and metaphysics of classical Greek philosophy to Christian theological concerns. Such representative philosophers as Boethius, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure sought to reconcile faith and reason in what Joseph Pieper has called a "contrapuntally structured unity" that would reconcile the tension they perceived between the two.[17] This "balance of tension" (to use another of Pieper's phrases) is what led to the complex, synthetic philosophies of medieval European Christianity. Rather than faith and reason, however, Buddhist scholastics sought to balance the immediate experience of meditation with the modes of logical analysis commonly used in Indian philosophical exegesis.[18] Many of the more scholastic Buddhist schools, including the Indian Vaibhāṣika, the Tibetan Dge-lugs-pa, and the Chinese Hua-yen, attempted to apply rigorous standards of intellectual verifiability to questions of religious achievement. The mārga thus provided a convenient means of ranking different types of spiritual experience, and of weaving them into comprehensive systems of Buddhist thought and practice.

But medieval Christian scholasticism was not simply rationalism. Most scholastics did not claim that human reason could comprehend everything, nor did they deny the mysteries of faith or divine revelation, despite the ultimate opacity of such things to reason. Indeed, Aquinas understood rational "proof" *(demonstratio)* to be more a matter of providing a "reason of convenience," and he undertook such proofs in attempts "to show how the truth of faith 'accords with' and 'suits' what we know from our own experience or rational argument."[19] Likewise,

Buddhist treatments of mārga nowhere claim that the intellectual exercise of mapping the path can itself produce enlightenment. It is only grudgingly that many Buddhist schools accept the value of intellectual analysis in Buddhist praxis. Instead, meditation was generally considered indispensable if practitioners were to achieve salvation for themselves. Rational analyses of spirituality are useful for providing the student with coherent outlines of the path of practice; but walking that path, and achieving its fruits, ultimately demand the abandonment or transcendence of rationality.

A paradox was thus created in Buddhist soteriology: to be a true protagonist of the mārga, one must also be its antagonist. This paradox underlies much of the tension in Buddhist descriptions of soteriology. Indirect, rational understanding of the mārga may provide support for direct, experiential apprehension of Buddhist truths, but that direct experience can only come once rational understanding is transcended. A reflection of this paradox may be found in the Hua-yen distinction between awakening as understanding *(chieh-wu)* and awakening as realization *(cheng-wu),* and in that tradition's oft-repeated claim that the former, defined as the intellectual apprehension of truths formulated in doctrine, is prelude to the latter, understood as the sort of direct encounter with truth made possible in part by the prior understanding of doctrine.[20]

Buddhist scholastics may once have sought to link their descriptions of meditative experience to specific religious teachings, but as Cox suggests in her chapter on the Vaibhāṣikas, it was not only or always issues of praxis that underlay the construction of elaborate mārga schemes. Rather, there was a diversity of concerns—theoretical and scholastic issues prominent among them—that prompted these cartographies of the path. And the maps they produced, Lopez reminds us in his contribution, are fictive in the sense that they review a path not yet traversed from a vantage point not yet reached but only projected. Although the design of an intellectually consistent and logically indefeasible mārga, in which all stages of the path serve a necessary function, may have been an interesting scholastic exercise, it may also have had little if anything to do with actual meditative practice. In the minds of the Buddhist scholastics who created these elaborate schemes, personal spiritual experience need not always have been at issue. While this is no doubt a pejorative conclusion—and one that the scholastic traditions themselves would probably have rejected—the evidence demands that we make it.

Indeed, the elaborate and meticulous construction of hierarchies of religious understanding may derive from a breakdown in religious praxis. Such failure might well have forced the creation of conceptual systems as an attempt to explain religious transitions that seemed problematic because they were no longer being achieved. It may be, then,

that in some cases hierarchically arranged and progressive mārgas were not intended as guides to actual experience. The numerological preoccupations so often evident in many mārga schemes (such as the fifty-three-stage Hua-yen system noted above) may belie the assumption of their foundation in actual practice. However, such judgments should not be construed as indictments of the validity of Buddhist religious experience or as challenges to the authority of Buddhist texts. They are intended simply as cautions, as reminders that such attempts to order—and thus to authenticate—Buddhist religious experience need not always be first-person accounts of actual religious experience.

## Mārga, Hermeneutics, and Polemics

This caveat on the interpretation of mārga is vital to an understanding of the many different types of issues mārga schemes were employed to resolve. One of the most important roles assigned to mārga was that of a hermeneutical device to be used in systematizing, and in interpreting between, the diverse doctrinal positions of various Buddhist traditions. For example, Buddhist schools often sought to associate particular stages along the mārga, usually lower ones, with various of their sectarian rivals, while holding the higher stages to correspond to their own doctrinal positions. The sequential listing of stages on the path was thus used to classify Buddhist schools hierarchically, sometimes invidiously, in what we might term a "soteriologically based" hermeneutic. The purpose of such rankings was not purely interpretive; it often had an implicit polemic thrust.

One of the most fully wrought hierarchies is that of the ten stages of realization devised by Kūkai (774–835), the Japanese founder of Shingon, who used an especially comprehensive mārga scheme to rank rival traditions, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. His "ten abodes of the mind" *(jūjūshin)* borrows an old Chinese term for the ten *bhūmis* and gives each stage a new description and a new referent. The first abode of the mind is that of the immoral, irreligious person who is immersed in "goatish desires," i.e., totally dominated by cravings for sex and food. The fourth abiding mind corresponds to the Hīnayānists, who recognize the truth of no-self *(anātman)* but little more than that, whereas the sixth relates to the Yogācārins, who generate universal compassion for all. Kūkai's path then progresses through stages corresponding to the Sanron (Mādhyamika), Tendai (T'ien-t'ai), and Kegon (Hua-yen) systems, culminating in his own Shingon Esoteric school. At this tenth and final stage, it is said, the practitioner is able to act in a completely free and unhindered manner on behalf of all sentient beings.[21] Kūkai's soteriological system is thus explicitly hermeneutical and polemical, while it also serves as a curriculum for individual spiritual advancement.

Yoshizu, in his contribution to this volume, discusses the similar hermeneutical and syncretic roles played in the history of Chinese Buddhism by such systems for classifying doctrines according to progressive visions of the path *(p'an-chiao chih tu).* Several of these were precursors of Kūkai's system. Still another parallel is provided in the soteriological typology of persons created by Atīśa (982–1054) in his *Bodhipathapradīpa.* As Hopkins explains in his chapter, despite the explicitly inclusionary agenda of this typology, it has an implicitly exclusionary purpose as well: to keep non-Buddhists off the list of religious practitioners. The exclusionary implications of such a typology contrast sharply with the Mahāyāna notion of universal compassion, revealing once again the polemical intent behind some Buddhist soteriological formulations.

## Mārga, Conditioning versus Deconditioning, and Faith

Some varieties of Buddhism—certain kinds of Ch'an and Zen, for example—commonly claim to offer direct, immediate experiences of truth which are said not to be products of any sequential practice. To be sure, these seemingly anti-mārga traditions often belie their own rhetoric by providing explicit orderings of experience that help to "domesticate the unknown" and make the process of liberation somewhat predictable (e.g., the five-ranks method of Ts'ao-tung Ch'an or the ox-herding pictures of the Lin-chi lineage). Nevertheless, we should not rush to dismiss their frequently repeated claims that the ultimate religious goal is somehow radically discontinuous with the path and not at all its product.

What is at work here is yet another paradox of mārga: If the goal (say, nirvāṇa) is averred to be unconditioned *(asaṃskṛta),* as seems always to be the case, how can it also be said to be in any sense achievable by following a conditioned and conditioning program of practice? How could any path be said to "condition" such a goal? Yet if the goal is not the product of the path, and if it is in that sense unconditioned by the path, what sort of causal efficacy or necessity can the path be said to have? And if it has none, what then is its value or relevance? Anne Klein raises these issues in her chapter in this volume. How is it, she asks, that a structured path can lead to unmediated, unstructured mystical experience? Drawing on exquisitely technical analyses of meditation argued in the Tibetan Dge-lugs-pa tradition, she shows that in that tradition the practice of meditation, especially at the intersection of calming *(śamatha)* and insight *(vipaśyanā),* is held to be a deconditioning process rather than a form of conditioning. As such, it is said to be an occasion when the constructed and constructing mind ceases its constructive activities and encounters the unconditioned directly, without mediation. Klein also notes that this view is not shared by other Tibetan traditions, such as Rdzogs-chen and Rnying-ma, which prefer to explain the effi-

cacy of the path by recourse to the gratuitous activity of the absolute itself. We can add that similar recourse is taken by those various Indian, Tibetan, and East Asian Buddhist traditions which are based on such notions as tathāgatagarbha (womb or embryo of buddhahood), the intrinsic purity of the mind *(cittaprakṛtivaimalyadhātu),* and so forth. In these, moreover, we see intimations of the spirituality of faith that would take shape in East Asia as Pure Land Buddhism.

Another facet of the same problem emerges when one considers not the intermediary goals of meditative attainment but the final goal of nirvāṇa. Given the notorious difficulty of characterizing, let alone defining, that goal, how better to understand the concept than by appreciating the sense in which nirvāṇa is implicit in, and shaped by, the very path leading to it? Ninian Smart has offered the useful analogy of the relationship between the goal of a game and the rules of that game.[22] Any effort to define a "home run," for example, would inevitably lead to a systematic statement of the rules of baseball. Likewise, the only feasible description of an ineffable religious goal would seem to be an outline of the path leading to it. In both cases, the goal is implicit in the rules of behavior leading to its attainment, and thus may be said to be accessible only through such behavior. Conversely, the meaning of any one element on the path consists principally in the contribution it makes to the achievement of the goal. Hence the conditioned and unconditioned realms have meaning only in relation to one another (just as nirvāṇa and saṃsāra are said to entail each other); without a path there is no destination, and without a destination, no path.

This accords well with Buddhist, especially Mahāyāna, gnosiology, in which the point is variously made that nirvāṇa is not really a destination at all. Indeed, it cannot be, for the common-sense meaning and deeper implications of a metaphor like "destination" are quite incompatible with other essential claims Buddhists insist on making about nirvāṇa. In Mahāyāna, we must recall, nirvāṇa is said to be "nonabiding" *(apratiṣṭhita).* To "achieve" nirvāṇa, then, is not to "arrive at," much less to "settle," anywhere. Rather (if we may hazard some descriptions that are themselves only metaphors, but perhaps less misleading than the metaphor of "destination"), to "achieve" nirvāṇa is to be released from confinement, to embark on a continuing transformation, to participate in unfettered change and in unbounded interrelation with all things and beings. This, we suspect, is part of what Nāgārjuna meant when he said, famously, "the very limit of nirvāṇa is precisely the limit of saṃsāra; between the two there is not the least difference."[23] Seen in this light, the discontinuity that would otherwise appear to separate the goal of nirvāṇa from the path fades, and the path becomes more deeply involved in that goal than any mere conditioning would allow; indeed, it is constitutive of the goal.

Still another attempt to resolve this paradox is found in discussions of soteriology in the Chinese Tathāgatagarbha traditions, which claimed that the innate seed of buddhahood is the dynamic force that both encourages and enables the student to practice the mārga. Thus in texts like *The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna (Ta-sheng ch'i-hsin lun),* innate enlightenment *(pen-chüeh)* is said to permit and to support the process by which enlightenment is actualized *(shih-chüeh).*[24] The conflation of goal and path seen in systems like those found in Rdzogs-chen, Hua-yen, and Sōtō Zen may have been prompted by similar attempts to resolve the problematic relationship between the conditioned and the unconditioned.

The same paradox seems also to culminate in the Pure Land doctrine of "other power," in which personal effort is said to be deleterious—or, in some systems, like Shinran's, even antithetical—to liberation.[25] Rather than the spiritual practice of the aspirant, Pure Land claims, it is the grace of an enlightened buddha that brings that aspirant to salvation. But such an explicitly "anti-mārga" stance could not have evolved without advocacy by many rival schools of Buddhism of elaborate soteriological systems demanding personal purification and growth. And even this approach need not imply that the mārga has been jettisoned. Rather, grace could be seen as an expedient means *(upāya)* of perfecting the soteriological program during the age of the demise of the dharma *(mo-fa, mappō),* when even the best of intentions are so easily overcome by dire circumstances and the simple impotence of sentient beings.

Indeed, the Pure Land school went so far as to equate particular Pure Land charisms with specific stages on the traditional mārga. It was in this vein that the *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra* (vow number 34) identified rebirth in Amitābha's Pure Land with what had traditionally been regarded as a bodhisattva's achievement of the perfection of "acquiescence to the nonproducation of dharmas" *(anutpattikadharmakṣānti),* a Mahāyāna term equivalent to nirvāṇa.[26] Hence even schools that do not at first glance seem to subscribe to progressive soteriological programs may have been responding in one way or another to the emphasis on method so characteristic of the rest of Buddhism. Even such radical responses to this fundamental emphasis do not in the end suffice to deny the integrity and centrality of mārga; instead, they developed ways of perfecting it that would be either faster or more timely.

## Mārga and the "Anti-Mārga" Tradition in Buddhist Thought

Perhaps the centrality of mārga to Buddhism, and its ineluctability, are nowhere better confirmed than in those traditions of Buddhist thought which seem to challenge or deny mārga but which also seem to end up reaffirming it. If Buddhist mārga can be shown to survive even those

threats to it posed by Buddhism itself, then its importance to Buddhism can be demonstrated beyond challenge. And just such affirmation of mārga, made in the teeth of its denial, can be shown often to be a defining characteristic of Buddhism.

At the heart of every religious tradition are certain fertile antinomies, certain rationally irresolvable oppositions of concept or value, that serve in their very irresolvability to keep the tradition alive, to foster its growth, and to prevent its closure or ossification. In the case of Buddhism, one of the most profound of these life-giving antinomies is the creative and persistent tension between that religion's fundamental cognitive claims and its most characteristic conative injunctions. On the one hand, Buddhism insists that the reality of the things and persons that comprise the world is fundamentally indeterminate and that all things and persons are thus devoid *(śūnya)* of any inherent structure or stable identity.[27] On the other hand, Buddhism has been equally adamant in claiming that particular patterns of effort and practice, both private spiritual practice and interpersonal moral conduct, are necessary to achieving the liberating realization that all things and persons are empty and indeterminate; necessary as well to achieving that abundance of compassion for all beings which is possible only for those who have realized emptiness.

In the Buddhist world of cognitive indeterminacy, all things or events are so thoroughly transient as to be actually instantaneous, so radically interdependent that none may be assigned its own fixed and discrete identity; thus is the lie given to all apparent differentiation and imagined substantiality. Yet in this unstructured and unstructurable world, some order, sequence, and stringency of disciplined practice are still deemed necessary. To be sure, Buddhists often warn themselves not to reify their practices. Any tendency to trust in the practical disciplines of Buddhism as though they were self-efficacious mechanisms, like any assumption that liberation is simply the conditioned *(saṃskṛta)* effect of certain efficient causes, is condemned as severely as those same disciplines are enjoined. Thus do Buddhist texts abound in such seeming self-contradictions as the claim that the fruit *(phala)* of practice is actually a prevenient cause *(hetu)* of its own causal practices,[28] the assertion that practice and realization are really indistinguishable from each other,[29] the claim that sudden realization precedes and enables gradual practice,[30] and even the conviction that all prideful confidence in the sufficiency of one's "own power" *(jiriki)* as exercised in "difficult practices" *(nangyō)* must be relinquished humbly in the "easy practice" *(igyō)* whereby one accepts the "other power" *(tariki)* of the transcendent.[31]

However, such warnings against the reification or exaggerated assessment of practice have seldom counted as warrants for the aban-

donment of practice. Whenever they have been misunderstood to be outright rejections of practice, as has occasionally happened, Buddhism has usually corrected the mistake promptly. In most cases it has managed to purge itself of the results of any attempt to transform its anomic *(nairātmya)* cognitive stance into practical antinomianism in the religious and ethical spheres of life. Thus early radical forms of Ch'an, like the Pao-t'ang school of eighth-century Szechwan, which is believed to have espoused literal non-practice,[32] were roundly condemned soon after their inceptions, and their stories lingered in Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist memory only as cautionary tales. A similar fate awaited extremely antinomian interpretations of Tantric texts and Pure Land principles. The repeated and consensual Buddhist judgment has been that the empty indeterminacy of things is not license for abandoning the deliberate Buddhist path, and that the very emptiness which some rash Buddhists have taken to validate such license cannot be realized except by assiduous practice of the path.

To say that Buddhism never succumbed to antinomianism, however, is not to say that the implicit tension between śūnyatā and mārga could simply be put out of mind, to be recalled only when heresy threatened. Rather, that tension functioned as a kind of spring, tightly wound at the core of Buddhism, providing the tradition with the kinetic energy necessary for its continued development. Its presence was remarked especially when Buddhism came into contact with other traditions that were wont to fix on one pole of the tension to the exclusion of the other and so, for example, to question or decry Buddhism's cognitive insistence on emptiness while ignoring the conative rigor and coherence of the Buddhist mārga. It was this failure to see the whole of Buddhism, we would suggest, which led orthodox Hindu thinkers often to accuse Buddhists of nihilism. The same misimpression characterized traditional Confucian (including "Neo-Confucian") reactions to Buddhism, in which the dharma was seen as a threat to the order and stability of social and political life, was excoriated as a conceptual caustic in which the bonds of moral responsibility were quickly dissolved, or was condemned as a seductive opiate that could lull one into the illusion that all things and beings are illusory.

Such issues are still the focus of lively debate within and about Buddhism. Recently, certain partial views of Buddhism reminiscent of those held by its ancient Hindu and Confucian critics have infected the dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity. The fault for this, we regret to say, lies more with the Buddhist parties to the dialogue than with their Christian interlocutors. Consider the following remarks by the Protestant Christian theologian Langdon Gilkey, made in his insightful review of Abe Masao's *Zen and Western Thought.*[33] Having discussed briefly the "progressive naturalism" of Dewey and Whitehead, to

which Buddhism has often been compared, Gilkey notes, quoting Abe as he proceeds:

> In starkest contrast to this [the naturalists'] confidence in the developmental possibilities of temporal sequence, Abe negates the meaning of all sequences in which the self participates. Nothing builds to a fruition, a satisfaction, an achievement either personal or social. "Substantial thinking," a world made up of selves and objects, self and environment, past events and future projects, and the scientific intelligence built upon that world, is creative of estrangement and not of resolutions; attachment to ends, natural or appraised, must be overcome and eradicated. All sequences of events lead nowhere, only to more desire and duality and the suffering consequent on both. Instead of an intelligently directed *continuity* of moments from puzzled past to problem-free future, the continuity of the moments of time must be negated and the independence of each moment emphasized: "Only by being freed from aim-oriented human action both in practice and in enlightenment is Dōgen's idea of oneness of practice and end realized. . . . This indicates complete discontinuity of time which is realized through negating a transition from one state to another. . . . Only by the realization of the complete discontinuity of time and of the independent moment, i.e., only by the negation of temporality, does time become real time." The true self is not achieved by intelligent action over time within the world; it is rather emptied of sequences as it is of all else. Through its realization of outer endlessness and "pointless" impermanence, it empties itself of attachments to objects or to self, to memories and to projects alike, and so it empties itself of world and of self in time. In that cool emptiness it becomes identical with the endless process outside of it—it is both enlightened and released. Unattached to any worldly meanings, it has *become* the meaningless natural world in which it participates. Put this way, Abe's Buddhism seems, in truth, to be the more valid mode of "natural piety" in such a totally unstructured and transient universe than does the optimistic, rational, moral and progressivist humanism of Dewey.

Reflecting the concern with morality that presently (and properly) dominates the Buddhist-Christian dialogue, Gilkey is here giving voice to the perennial Christian (and also, perhaps, Jewish and Islamic) "supernaturalist" view that there can be no order in the world, certainly no teleological order, unless there is also a transcendent orderer. He is troubled by both the Buddhist and the Western "naturalist" rejection of a transcendent agent, fearing that lack of such an agent, and lack of belief in transcendence generally, deprives Buddhists and others of any possible foundation for the personal or communal moral life. Despite its distinctively Christian emphasis on the transcendent, however, Gilkey's reservations about Buddhism are not unlike those of its earlier Confucian critics, who saw similar dangers for morality in the Buddhist denial of immanent moral principles *(li)*.[34] The Christian attributes the possibility of order and teleological progression to the work of a transcendent

orderer, whereas the Confucian attributes it to the presence *in the world* of constitutive moral patterns. But whether the structure of things and human action is held to come from beyond or from within, Buddhism seems, in its claim that all is empty and indeterminate, to deny structure entirely, or to locate its origin in the ignorant craving of the deluded human mind. Thus has it incurred the incredulity or apprehension, and sometimes the hostility, of Christian and Confucian alike.

Part of the problem here, we would suggest, is that the Buddhism about which Gilkey is so apprehensive, represented in this case by Abe Masao, is a truncated, asymmetrical, perhaps even eccentric Buddhism. Abe and the "Kyoto school" of religious philosophy of which he is a prominent spokesman—probably in a less than fully conscious effort to accentuate just those aspects of Buddhism that are both most different from Western traditions and most distinctively Japanese—have fostered in the West the now widespread conception of Buddhism as a tradition of exclusively cognitive import, inordinately preoccupied with the most apophatic register of Buddhist doctrine. Thus in the current phase of the Buddhist-Christian dialogue there is relentless talk of śūnyatā, nonduality, "absolute nothingness," and the like, but precious little talk of karma, mārga, compassion, or even the "marvelous qualities of buddhahood." The Buddhism that so repulsed and alarmed Chu Hsi seven centuries ago was a similarly partial tradition, made to seem morally incoherent and dangerous by a refusal to see it whole. Such refusals consist in failures to give as much attention to the positive disciplines (including morality) that comprise the actual lives of Buddhists as one gives to those cognitive claims which, taken by themselves, suggest that Buddhists are unable to treat the world of human endeavor seriously. They also lead to an unfortunate deafness to the affirmative soteriological message of Buddhism, which is as much a part of the tradition as its metaphysical negation. These are failures, in other words, to appreciate the stubborn persistence and unavoidable centrality of mārga in even the most apophatic of Buddhist contexts.

## Mārga and the Transcendent

An approach to Buddhism that gives mārga and Buddhism's conative import a value equal to that normally assigned to the cognitive message of śūnyatā and associated concepts—an approach, that is to say, which exploits the vital and productive tension between the two constituents of the tradition—will reveal, we would propose, a Buddhism that is at once less alien from the world of ordinary human concerns and more sensitive to the presence of the transcendent in that world. It is under the rubric of mārga or concerted and methodical practice that Buddhism addresses itself to such temporal matters as the regimen of daily

life, the particular arts and sciences of self-cultivation, the values and norms of interpersonal relationships, institutional organization and authority, and so forth. Because the overriding concern in such matters must be with spiritual efficacy, with what "works" and what does not "work" unto liberation, it follows that attention to issues of mārga invites consideration of such questions as the source of spiritual efficacy. How is it that deliberate spiritual disciplines can be effective, given the inherent emptiness that must mark them all? How can obedience to the precepts, scriptural study, asceticism, calming of the mind and body, exercise of analytical insight, and so on collaborate to sustain a coherent course of spiritual development? How can they lead consistently to a single end? Were one to focus only on the cognitive message of Buddhism, the message of metaphysical indeterminacy, such efficacy would be inexplicable, perhaps even unlikely. But since Buddhists teach mārga as insistently as they teach śūnyatā, we have good reason to believe that the practical principles of structure, continuity, and efficacy implicit in the one are as important as the theoretical principles of indeterminacy, discontinuity, and structurelessness implicit in the other. If this is so, then the reality of things and actions is not exhausted by their emptiness but must consist equally in "the marvelous qualities of buddhahood" that are thought to quicken all things and actions, to energize them, and to endow them with their efficacy.

There is ample room in all this, we would suggest, for a more transcendentalist, even supernaturalist interpretation of Buddhism than is usually found in those readings of the tradition that stress only its world-withering vision of emptiness. One need not restrict oneself to purely immanentist or naturalist interpretations of Buddhism, like Abe Masao's and Langdon Gilkey's (or, for that matter, like Chu Hsi's), all of which puzzle and disturb those Buddhists who find evidence that the transcendent is active in the world and who believe that a coherent religious and moral life is impossible without such transcendent support. In other words, although Buddhism has good epistemological and dialectical reason to deny the cognitive validity of categories like "the transcendent," and therefore to argue that the world is empty and indeterminable, it has equally good soteriological and gnosiological reason to affirm the same categories as necessary supports or prerequisites of the full and coherent religious life. The "buddha-nature" that must be judged empty (along with everything else) must also be judged actual, apodictic, and efficacious; otherwise the very practices that enable the realization of emptiness would be otiose or impossible. Should this seem improbable in light of the rigorous apophasis of so much of Buddhism, let us cite a well-known but inexhaustible line from Nāgārjuna himself: "Ultimate truth is not taught except upon the foundation of conventional discourse" *(vyavahāraṃ anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate).*[35] Conven-

tional transactional usage *(vyavahāra)* and its rough equivalent, conventional truth *(saṃvṛtisatya)*, are but locutionary instances of emptiness and indeterminacy. For them actually to serve as a "support" or "foundation" *(āśraya,* Ch. *i)* of ultimate truth, or as a vehicle for the transmission thereof, they must have some efficacy, some supportive force. From what else could such efficacy or force derive, if not from the energizing presence of the transcendent (buddhahood, etc.) within the emptiness of transactional usage?[36] Such at least was a conclusion, Robert Gimello argues in his chapter, that was often drawn within the East Asian Buddhist traditions, and in this the East Asian traditions were quite in harmony with the still underappreciated kataphatic traditions of Indian and Tibetan Buddhism.[37]

## Mārga and Culture

At least one other kind of consequence to Buddhism's emphasis on mārga deserves our attention. If Buddhism, as a religion of mārga, enjoins upon its adherents programs of discipline and structures of life that differ markedly from life as it usually lived in the secular world—and if mārga is as different as it seems to be from all secular life-forms, regardless of whether they be naturally evolved or deliberately constructed—then what kinds of relation are possible and desirable between mārga and the disciplines and activities of secular life? This, of course, is but a variation on the age-old, universal question of the relation of religion to culture, but if it is a question that we would ask of Buddhism, we must ask it apropos of mārga, explicitly and particularly.

Again Ch'an and Zen Buddhism would seem to qualify as a good case-study of this issue. As a form of Buddhism that tends, in one way or another, to emphasize practice or experience rather than, say, reflection or study, Ch'an/Zen would seem to be a partisan of Buddhism's emphasis on mārga. And yet we know it to be one of the most vociferously anti-mārga of all Buddhist traditions, at least in its rhetoric and in its frequent disavowal of routine, gradualist practice. To these two, somewhat contradictory, features of Ch'an and Zen we can add their intimate association, throughout their East Asian histories virtually since their inceptions, with traditions of secular art and literature (poetry, painting, calligraphy, *belles lettres,* Noh drama—even tea ceremony, flower arrangement, ritual archery, etc). Moreover, through such associations, Ch'an and Zen have often come into closer contact than have other schools with non-Buddhist traditions of religious thought and practice like Confucianism and Taoism.

These multivalent connections—between Ch'an's mārga or anti-mārga Buddhist postures, the secular cultures of the environments in which Ch'an flourished, and non-Buddhist traditions competing with

Ch'an—are the subject of Gimello's essay in this volume. That essay deals with an array of questions including the following: Can disciplines originally extrinsic to mārga, and often thought to be inimical thereto, nevertheless be incorporated into larger definitions of mārga that do not consist only of traditional Buddhist disciplines? If this is possible, as when Ch'an monks become painters and poets, under what kind of constraints and cautions must it proceed if it is not to threaten the integrity or distract from the proper goals of the Buddhist life? Can the disciplines of secular culture be sacralized and incorporated into Buddhist mārga, and what are the limits of that enterprise? How, in turn, can secular cultural traditions make creative use of the disciplines and attitudes implicit in mārga, without denaturing or otherwise abusing them? And how can mārga contribute to, or participate in, the dialogue that inevitably occurs when Buddhism and non-Buddhist traditions meet on the common ground of a shared secular culture? It is hoped that questions of this particular and historical kind may allow further, more universally focused questions about the relevance of mārga to wider ranges of human concern.

## Conclusion

Against the background of issues like those sketched above, we wish to suggest that mārga is a factor pervading everything that is Buddhist, uniting not only its various practices and its various adherents, but also its disparate traditions and its conflicting attitudes toward its own and other forms of life.

We also believe that the possibilities for the general revisioning of religion suggested by Buddhism's emphasis on the path offer the further possibility of a more holistic assessment not only of Buddhism but of any religious tradition. Mārga, we would suggest, provides an especially integrative way of interpreting religion, an approach in which all elements of a tradition can be seen to collaborate in the service of the common goal of liberation. Under the template of mārga, a religion's doctrines can be seen to correspond to its concrete practices and to flow from them; its worldviews and axiologies can be seen as implicit in its regimens of practice; the popular piety of its common adherents can be seen to resonate deeply with the insights informing the conceptual systems of its more élite and reflective adherents. We propose that mārga —at least as much as, if not more than, doctrine—creates among the various strata of a religion's adherents a sense of community, of what Buddhists call "saṃgha," despite the variety of their many particular concerns and needs. Emphasis on a practical spirituality, even when framed in scholastic terms, has the effect of bringing the highest reaches of religious achievement within the purview of the most humble of

adherents. It also demands that even the more basic of practices be directly preparatory to, if not actually reflected within, the most advanced disciplines. By making religious achievement measurable in terms relevant to daily life, all the activities of ordinary adherents are made to serve the soteriological process. The famous statement of the lay Ch'an practitioner P'ang Yün (d. 808)—really a comment on the pervasiveness of mārga—may therefore apply: "Mysterious power and marvelous function: carrying water and gathering kindling."

If our confidence in the potential of mārga as a category for the study both of Buddhism in particular and of religion generally seems unwarranted even after all we have said so far, we trust that the chapters which follow, in their more extensive arguments and documentation, will provide ample compensation and confirmation.

## Notes

1. We must bear in mind, however, that although the concept of "path" may be more thoroughly developed in Buddhism than elsewhere, it is not exclusive to Buddhism. As Karl Potter and others have shown, it seems to be important in all the major Indian traditions. See Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963), esp. pp. 36–46 and 236–256. Nevertheless, when one considers both Indian Buddhism and Buddhism as it developed outside of India, the sheer quantity and variety of mārga discourse exceeds whatever may be found in, say, the varieties of Hinduism, Jainism, etc.

2. See, for example, the entries on "Soteriology" in James Hastings, general ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. E. Clarke, 1908–1926) and Mircea Eliade, general ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1987). Note, too, that in its pre-Christian Greek etymology, *"soter"* actually means "healer"—a point worth pondering in view of Buddhism's common depiction of the Buddha as a healer or a physician, to which we refer below.

3. For example, when an adjectival form is needed. "Soteriological" is, after all, an acceptable locution, whereas we are reluctant to coin the term "mārgic." The term "soteriology" may also be advisable when introducing Buddhist notions of mārga into ongoing scholarly discussions of soteriology as instanced in other traditions.

4. *Dīghanikāya* II.156.

5. K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), chs. 7 and 8.

6. *Majjhimanikāya* I.134–135.

7. Joseph Pieper, *Scholasticism: Personalities and Problems in Medieval Philosophy,* trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), 39.

8. The "four noble truths," the "four approaches and fruits," and the "ten perfections" are treated in most general introductions to Buddhism. The *locus classicus* of the version of "ten stages" scheme given here is the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra,* which has been rendered into English from the Sanskrit by Megumu Honda and Johannes Rahder, "Annotated Translation of the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra,*" in *Studies in South, East, and Central Asia: A Memorial Volume for the Late Professor Raghu Vira,* Śata-Piṭaka Series, vol. 74, Denis Sinor, ed. (New Delhi:

International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968), 115–276. The "five paths" scheme, less well known in Western literature, is associated especially with the various Abhidharma traditions and was given one of its most influential classical formulations by Asaṅga in his *Abhidharmasamuccaya;* see Asaṅga, *Le Compendium de la super-doctrine (philosophie) (Abhidharmasamuccaya),* trans. Walpola Rahula, Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient LXXVIII (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1971). Several of the essays in this volume treat of the third and fourth of these five paths. For an English-language treatment of the Hua-yen path—listing its fifty-three stages and coordinating them with the fifty-three teachers whom the mythical pilgrim-bodhisattva Sudhana met on his journey in the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra,* but dealing especially with the influence of the latter on Buddhist art—see Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana: A Study of Gaṇḍavyūha Illustrations in China, Japan, and Java* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1967). The only extensive treatment of the "five ranks" theme in a Western language is Alfonso Verdu's rather obscure *Dialectical Aspects in Buddhist Thought: Studies in Sino-Japanese Mahāyāna Idealism,* International Studies, East Asian Series Research Publication No. 8 (Lawrence, Kans.: Center for East Asian Studies, The University of Kansas, 1974), 115–242.

9. These lines—*"sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ kusalassa upasampadā sacittapariyodapanaṃ etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ"*—or close variations on them, are found in numerous canonical sources. Their most famous occurrence, perhaps, is as verse 183 of the *Dhammapada.*

10. See the treatment of this concept in Bernard Faure's *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

11. See Jacques May, "Chōotsushō," in *Hōbōgirin: Dictionnaire encyclopédique du bouddhisme d'aprés les sources chinoises et japonaises* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve), quatrième fascicule (1967): 366–370 and cinquième fascicule (1979): 371.

12. On this, see Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "Chinul's Ambivalent Critique of Radical Subitism in Korean Sŏn Buddhism," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 12.2 (1989): 20–44; also Buswell's translation of Chinul's major writings: idem, *The Korean Approach to Zen: The Collected Works of Chinul* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), especially 56–61.

13. Buswell has discussed the implications of this interpretation in "Chinul's Ambivalent Critique."

14. A conference on this very topic, the most recent in a series, was held in October 1990 at the Songgwang Monastery in Korea. At the same time the conference was held, its proceedings, entitled *Pojo sasang* 4, were published by the monastery's Institute for the Study of Chinul's Thought (Pojo sasang yŏn'guwŏn).

15. See the summary of Stevenson's presentation in Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Robert M. Gimello, "Buddhist Soteriology: The Mārga and Other Approaches to Liberation: A Conference Report," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 13-1 (1990): 97–98.

16. See Pieper, *Scholasticism,* p. 53. The original German version of Pieper's work, entitled *Scholastik,* was published in 1952, in Munich, by Koesel Verlag.

17. Ibid., p. 39.

18. The classical treatment of this issue is Louis de La Vallée Poussin, "Mūsila et Nārada: le chemin du *nirvāṇa,*" *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 5 (1937): 189–222. More recent treatments of the topic are too numerous to list, but special notice should be taken of K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of*

*Knowledge* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), particularly chapters V through VIII.

19. Pieper, *Scholasticism*, p. 46.

20. For these two types of awakening, see Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "Chinul's Systematization of Chinese Meditative Techniques in Korean Sŏn Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 4 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, A Kuroda Institute Boook, 1986), 204–207.

21. See Kūkai's *Jūjūshin ron*, as summarized in *Hizō hōyaku* (The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury), trans. in Yoshito S. Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 162–224. For convenient companion charts of the soteriological goals of each stage, together with their respective sectarian affiliations, see Miyasaka Yūshō and Umehara Takeshi, *Inochi no umi: Kūkai*, Bukkyō no shisō, no. 9 (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1968), 105–107.

22. Ninian Smart, *Reasons and Faiths: An Investigation of Religious Discourse, Christian and Non-Christian* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958).

23. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 25:20.

24. See T 32.575–583, or Yoshito S. Hakeda, trans. and commentator, *The Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

25. The editors are keenly aware of, and very much regret, the fact that Pure Land Buddhism, consideration of which is essential to any full treatment of mārga, is glaringly absent from this volume.

26. *Wu-liang-shou ching* 1, *T* 12.268c18–20. *Anutpattikadharmakṣānti* is the realization gleaned by the bodhisattva on the seventh *bhūmi*, when he realizes that all dharmas are eternally uncreated and empty. Through his acquiescence to that fact, the bodhisattva is able to perceive directly the quiescence inherent to all phenomena and thus he overcomes all limited views about the conditioned nature of things.

27. We employ the term "indeterminate" here in the sense in which Bimal K. Matilal has used it in his discussions of Mādhyamika. See his *Epistemology, Logic, and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971), esp. pp. 146–167.

28. This classical Mahāyāna theme was given special emphasis in the Hua-yen tradition of East Asian Buddhism. It also served as part of the foundation of Hua-yen mārga theory. According to that theory, the bodhisattva's path is both complex and simple, both instantaneous and gradual. It comprises as many as fifty-three stages and stations (matching Sudhana's fifty-three *kalyānamitra*), but in each stage, even the most elementary, the final goal of buddhahood is proleptically and causally present. Li T'ung-hsüan's (635?–730?) expressions of this mystery are authoritative for much of the later tradition, and a typical example of them is the following, from the introduction to his *Exposition of the Flower Garland Scripture* (*Hua-yen-ching lun* 1, *T* 36.730a3–5): "And so with the ten stages and ten abodes among the five divisions of the bodhisattva's path, the fruit of buddhahood *(fo-kuo)* is present in each and all of them, just as the ocean is present in each droplet of sea water. This is because the various practices are not carried out apart from the buddha-nature and it is just by means of this buddha-nature that progressive cultivation *(chin-hsiu)* is possible." It became common for Hua-yen thinkers to discuss the various relations between cause and fruit by means of their analogy with the various relations (contrast, complementarity, difference, identity, interfusion, mutual support, etc.) among the "three sages," i.e., among Vairocana, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī, the former representing the fruit or effect of attainment while the latter two represent

cause or practice. See, for example, the sententious and influential *San-sheng yüan-jung kuan-men* (Contemplations of the Perfect Interfusion of the Three Sages, *T* 45.671a-672b), attributed to Ch'eng-kuan (738-839?).

29. This is a view especially associated in modern East Asian Buddhist scholarship with Dōgen's (1200-1253) dictum, *shushō ittō* (unification of cultivation and realization), but of course it was not really original with him. See *Shōbōgenzō,* "Bendōwa."

30. The Hua-yen and Ch'an patriarch Tsung-mi (780-841) gave classical expression to this notion, which echoed repeatedly in the later history of Ch'an, Sŏn, and Zen. See Peter N. Gregory, "Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual Cultivation: Tsung-mi's Analysis of Mind," in idem, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought,* Studies in East Asian Buddhism 5 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 279-320.

31. We allude, of course, to Shinran's (1173-1262) version of Pure Land doctrine, the conventional interpretation of which holds that he had foresworn traditional notions of mārga and had discarded practice or cultivation in favor of faith. However, despite his claim that the faith expressed in the *nembutsu* is "non-practice" *(higyō),* it is clear that faith is itself a discipline, and a rather rigorous one at that, regardless of its unconventionality (elsewhere, in fact, Shinran calls it "the great practice" [*daigyō*], *Kyōgyōshinshō* II). On this point see Tokunaga Michio, "Shinran no daigyō ni tsuite," in Nihon Bukkyō Gakkai, eds., *Bukkyō ni okeru shūgyō to sono rironteki konkyo* (Kyoto: Heirakuji, 1980), 405-420. Moreover, reliance on faith rather than conventional practice falls short of being an entirely anti-mārga attitude insofar as it need not lead to absolute antinomianism. So Shinran himself explained when, in reply to someone who had interpreted Amida's vow as encouragement to commit evil, he noted that "it is not necessary to take poison just because there is a remedy available" (*Tannishō* XIII).

32. See Jeffrey Broughton, "Early Ch'an Schools in Tibet," in Robert M. Gimello and Peter N. Gregory, eds., *Studies in Ch'an and Hua-yen,* Studies in East Asian Buddhism 1 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 1-68.

33. *The Eastern Buddhist* 19 (Autumn 1986): 118-119. The book Gilkey is here reviewing, edited by William LaFleur, was published in 1985 by University of Hawaii Press.

34. There is a growing literature exploring these aspects of the issue of Buddhism and morality. The following are a few of the general works we have found useful on the subject, even though we do not agree with all the arguments they adduce:

Douglas A. Fox, "Zen and Ethics: Dōgen's Synthesis," *PEW* 21 (January 1971): 33-41.

George Rupp, "The Relationship between Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra: An Essay on the Evolution of Buddhist Ethics," *PEW* 21 (January 1971): 55-67.

Luis O. Gómez, "Emptiness and Moral Perfection," *PEW* 23 (July 1973): 361-373.

Charles Wei-hsün Fu, "Morality and Beyond: The Neo-Confucian Confrontation with Mahāyāna Buddhism," *PEW* 23 (July 1973): 375-396.

A. D. Brear, "The Nature and Status of Moral Behavior in the Zen Buddhist Tradition," *PEW* 24 (October 1974): 429-437.

Thomas P. Kasulis, *Zen Action/Zen Person* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981), esp. 94-99.

Charles Wei-hsün Fu, "Chu Hsi on Buddhism," in Wing-tsit Chan, ed., *Chu*

*Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 377–407.

James Whitehill, "Is There a Zen Ethic?" *The Eastern Buddhist* 20 (Spring 1987): 9–33.

35. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 24:10 (for the Chinese, see *T* 30.33a).

36. It was something like this, in part, to which the Hua-yen thinker Fa-tsang (643–712) was referring in his scholastic ruminations on the "six meanings of causation," as when he noted that in one sense any cause may have efficacy *(li)* while also being empty. See *Hua-yen wu-chiao chang* 4, *T* 45.502b. However, the issue of how *vyavahāra* or *saṃvṛti* may be efficacious is difficult and has long been controversial within Buddhism. The most thoroughgoing apophatic traditions were reluctant even to consider the matter. Thus, as David Ruegg has noted, "Candrakīrti evidently regards the surface-level processes of transactional usage as causally indeterminate—even as antinomic and unamenable to ontological construction." Ruegg goes on to note that this was a principal issue separating Candrakīrti and the Prāsaṅgika tradition of Mādhyamika from Bhāvaviveka and the Svātantrika tradition. One might also mention that the issue seems to have played a role in the differentiation of Yogācāra from Mādhyamika. See David S. Ruegg, *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India,* A History of Indian Literature, vol. VII, fasc. 1 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981), 75.

37. For one of the more recent of his several astute and learned treatments of this theme, see David Seyfort Ruegg, "The Buddhist Notion of an Immanent Absolute as a Problem in Comparative Religious and Philosophical Hermeneutics," which comprises the first of its author's 1987 Jordan Lectures delivered at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. These lectures have been published as idem, *Buddha-nature, Mind, and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective: On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (London: The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1989).

## Glossary

**Abe Masao** 阿部正雄
**Amida** 阿彌陀
**Butsu** 佛
**Ch'an** 禪
**ch'ao-yüeh** 超越
**cheng-chung-lai** 正中來
**cheng-chung-pien** 正中偏
**cheng-wu** 證悟
**Ch'eng-kuan** 澄觀
**chieh-wu** 解悟
**chien-chung-chih** 兼中至
**chien-chung-tao** 兼中到
**Chih-i** 智顗
**chin-hsiu** 進修
**Chinul** 知訥
**chu** 住
**Chu Hsi** 朱熹
**daigyō** 大行
**Dōgen** 道元
**ekō** 廻向
**Fo** 佛
**fo-kuo** 佛果
**goi** 五位
**gyō** 行
**Gyōnen** 凝然
**henchūshō** 偏中正
**higyō** 非行
***Hizō hōyaku*** 祕藏寶鑰
**hsin** 信
**hsing** 行
***Hua-yen-ching lun*** 華嚴經論
***Hua-yen wu-chiao chang*** 華嚴五教章
**hui-hsiang** 廻向
**Hwaŏm** 華嚴
**i** 依
**igyō** 易行

ji 地
jiriki 自力
*Jōdo hōmon genryūshō* 淨土法門源流章
jū 住
jūjūshin 十住心
*Jūjūshinron* 十住心論
k'an-hua 看話禪
Kegon 華嚴
kenchūshi 兼中至
kenchūtō 兼中到
kōan 公案
Kūkai 空海
*Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信證
li 理
Lin-chi 臨濟
mappō 末法
miao-chüeh 妙覺
mo-fa 末法
myōkaku 妙覺
nangyō 難行
nembutsu 念佛
noh 能
p'an-chiao chih tu 判教制度
P'ang Yün 龐蘊
Pao-t'ang 保唐
pien-chung-cheng 偏中正
*San-sheng yüan-jung kuan-men* 三聖圓融觀門
shin 信
Shinran 親鸞
*Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏
shōchūhen 正中偏
shōchūrai 正中來
shushō ittō 修證一等
Sŏn 禪
Sōtō 曹洞
T'ien-t'ai 天台
Ta-hui Tsung-kao 大慧宗杲
*Ta-sheng ch'i-hsin lun* 大乘起信論
*Tannishō* 歎異抄
tariki 他力
Tendai 天台
teng-chüeh 等覺
ti 地
tōgaku 等覺
Ts'ao-tung 曹洞
Tsung-mi 宗密
wu-wei 五位
Yoshizu Yoshihide 吉津宜英
*Zazenron* 坐禪論
Zen 禪

# Theravāda Buddhist Soteriology and the Paradox of Desire

GRACE G. BURFORD

## Introduction

The path (mārga) to enlightenment has traditionally functioned as the focus of Buddhist practice and theory. As Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello have observed, each of the various Buddhist schools delineates and endorses a specific path, or pattern of religious behavior, that is seen as leading inevitably to a particular religious goal. In many cases we find quite a few points of disagreement among these different versions of Buddhist soteriology and the interpretations of reality they imply. The Buddhist tradition's lack of consistency with regard to the Buddha's most basic claims comes as no great surprise because of its long history and extensive geographical spread. Such inconsistency, although of some interest to the historian of religions, has little significance for the Buddhist believer-practitioners who are aligned with one of the many specific types of Buddhism. Inconsistencies between the doctrines and practices of any one school of Buddhism and those of another have little impact on the followers of either one. These inconsistencies are not used to challenge the basic truth-claim of the religion because no one takes the entire corpus of teachings attributed to the Buddha over the past twenty-five centuries—from the early Pali scriptures to the later Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan texts—as a reliable record of the truth that the Buddha saw and taught.[1]

In contrast, the presence of inconsistencies within a particular Buddhist tradition raises serious questions. In this case inconsistencies are problematic both for the believer-practitioner in that tradition who attempts to implement the advice of the Buddha in daily practice and for the philosopher who seeks to evaluate this version of the Buddha's teachings as a description of a path to the highest human good. Every version of the buddhadhamma (truth, teachings of the Buddha) includes components we might distinguish as epistemology, metaphysics,

cosmology, soteriology, and ethics. Some inconsistencies within this complex of teachings may actually pose no problem whatsoever. After all, a specific bit of practical advice is not generally expected to be universally applicable. For example, it does not seem unreasonable for the Buddha to have told one person to work hard and give alms and another to take up the life of a wandering mendicant and gather alms. This inconsistency does not pose a serious challenge to the validity of the Buddha's teachings because both pieces of advice reflect a consistent, underlying, normative value theory. The purpose of both giving and gathering alms is assumed to be the cultivation of selflessness, and the two practices can be seen as different stages of the path to eventual elimination of selfish attachment.

Indeed, even more theoretical points of doctrine may safely conflict as long as they are explained in terms of a common evaluation of what is fundamentally true and good. Insofar as the various teachings attributed to the Buddha concerning the path to the highest ideal reflect a consistent assessment of what is ultimately valuable, no particular inconsistencies among them seriously challenge either the believer-practitioner's ability to put them into practice or the philosopher's acceptance of the fundamental Buddhist claim that the Buddha discovered and taught the truth.

If the scriptures of any particular branch or school of Buddhism are truthful records of the Buddha's efforts to teach his followers how to reach, as he had done, the highest religious goal, they must contain answers to two crucial questions: (1) what is the highest religious goal? and (2) how does one attain it? Here I will consider what happens within one particular Buddhist tradition, the Theravāda, when one of its most ancient normative texts implies conflicting answers to these fundamental questions—when it presents two different explicit patterns of religious behavior that reflect contradictory concepts of the highest religious goal.

The Theravāda is the oldest known school of Buddhism, describing itself as not only the earliest but also the most conservative of the schools, the one that preserves unchanged the words *(vāda)* of the Buddha as remembered and codified shortly after his death in the sixth century B.C.E. by his immediate disciples, the elders *(theras)*. For the strictly orthodox Theravāda believer, there is no such thing as doctrinal development within the Theravāda canonical texts. In this view, the Pali scriptures record the very words of the Buddha *(buddhavacana)*, the fully enlightened one, whose teachings required no improvement or alteration.

The Theravāda did develop a long tradition of commentarial literature in which many skilled interpreters explained the teachings of the Buddha, as recorded in the Pali canon, in greater and greater detail.

Their aim is not to alter the Buddha's teachings, however, but to dispel any appearance of inconsistency or confusion within the recorded buddhadhamma. From this traditional Theravāda perspective, the Buddha's specific advice may have varied from time to time or follower to follower, but it all reflects a consistent and coherent worldview that an able commentator can elucidate. This commentarial tradition began even before the closing of the canon (ca. second century B.C.E.) and reached its peak during the fifth century C.E. in the literary activity of Buddhaghosa, whose work is considered normative in the traditional Theravāda interpretation of buddhadhamma.

The canonical Theravāda text I will examine here, the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* is one of the few Pali texts for which there is substantial evidence of its historical place within the early Buddhist literature. It appears in the Chinese *Āgamas* with contents almost identical to the Pali version.[2] In addition, the Bhabru edict of Aśoka refers to several suttas that appear to belong to the *Aṭṭhakavagga.*[3] Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese texts refer often to the *Aṭṭhakavagga* by name.[4] The most convincing indication of its relative antiquity within Buddhist literature is the fact that a commentary on it (the *Mahāniddesa*) forms the major portion of the only commentary accepted as canonical by the Theravāda tradition. Thus the *Aṭṭhakavagga* seems to have been a popular text that has been preserved, referred to, and interpreted within the Buddhist tradition since its early history. By Buddhaghosa's time, it had long been treated as the fourth *vagga* of the *Sutta-nipāta,* and Buddhaghosa comments on it as such in his commentary on the *Sutta-nipāta* (the *Paramatthajotikā II*). By focusing on the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* we can consider not only a very interesting and relatively early Buddhist text, but also the Theravāda interpretations of that text dating from two significant periods in the history of this Buddhist tradition, namely, the late-canonical period and the time of Buddhaghosa.

## The *Aṭṭhakavagga*

### *The Ideal and the Path*

No one term emerges in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* as a label for the ultimate goal of the path therein prescribed. For example, one cannot examine all instances of the word "nibbāna" in this text and hope to understand the ideal goal according to the teaching it presents. Neither is it possible to understand this goal by examining all the other terms used in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* to designate the ideal goal, because that goal is for the most part discussed indirectly—through depictions of what exemplary persons do and avoid doing, and through contrasts drawn between such persons and others who represent less-than-ideal attitudes and behavior.

This linguistic feature of the text reflects a significant aspect of the religious worldview preserved in the *Aṭṭhakavagga:* the definition of the highest ideal is inseparable from the delineation of how persons can live life fully and well. That is, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* focuses primarily on the path, which it defines in terms of the person who cultivates it. Further, through its almost exclusive focus on explicit patterns of behavior and characteristics or qualities of persons (both ideal and less than ideal), it implies that the goal is equivalent to the path perfected (i.e., properly followed). If one does what ideal persons do, one has followed the path and attained the goal.[5] The summum bonum is neither transcendent nor categorically distinct from what is good to do and what is bad to do, for all people, in everyday life.

The terms the *Aṭṭhakavagga* uses most frequently to refer to the goal are *suddhi* (purity) and *santi* (calmness). According to the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* when one has achieved the ideal, one has achieved purity and calmness. Yet neither of these terms represents an abstract notion of a goal apart from the ideal person's qualities. In this text purity and calmness have no significance apart from pure or calm people.

Further, as characteristics of ideal persons, purity and calmness tend to reveal more about the less-than-ideal condition than about the ideal condition. Purity, as an ideal, points to the fact that nonideal persons are subject to certain specific impurities. Although the text discusses the impurities considered characteristic of less-than-ideal persons, the exact meaning of purity remains unspecified. Purity does not involve doing certain things or being a certain way, but rather consists of not behaving in specific ways. The same observation holds generally for calmness, which amounts to an absence of anxieties. Such anxieties can be pinpointed in the text, but calmness is just calmness (i.e., not being agitated, not being excitable, not being quick to anger, feel grief, etc.).

Several other terms that occur in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* could represent the goal that ideal persons have reached. *Viveka* (seclusion or separation) is used to refer to seclusion or separation of the individual person, rather than expressing a characteristic of the goal itself. It is not that the goal is isolated from the less-than-ideal world in any way; rather, the ideal person strives for seclusion (v. 822) and sees seclusion (v. 851). Likewise, *khema* (security) is used to refer directly to a condition of the ideal person. With both these terms, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* continues to elucidate the goal by contrasting it with qualities of less-than-ideal life.

The Theravāda tradition's primary label for the goal, nibbāna, occurs in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* three times. Verse 940 advises the person striving for the ideal to "train for his/her nibbāna";[6] v. 822 describes the one striving for *viveka* as "near nibbāna"; and v. 942 describes a trainee on the path to the ideal as one "having [his/her] mind [set] on nibbāna." These three instances of the term "nibbāna" are the only

times the *Aṭṭhakavagga* uses labels for the ideal goal that do not refer to a particular attribute or quality of the person who has reached it. Since there is no definition of "nibbāna" in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* we should not rule out the possibility that in this text the word does signify something specific about the ideal person that has been obscured by the later development of this word. The one occurrence in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* of its verb-form counterpart, *nibbāti,* indicates that even this goal-referent was understood in terms of the actions or achievements of an ideal person:

> Having seen what does a bhikkhu *nibbāti* [become cool?], not grasping anything in the world?[7]

All four of these examples are consistent with the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s overall treatment of terms that refer to the goal, in that they focus on how the ideal person strives for the goal, rather than substantively describing the ideal condition itself.

In light of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s anthropocentric treatment of the goal itself, it comes as no surprise that almost every line of every verse in this text says something about the persons who have achieved this ideal or are striving for it. This information falls into two broad categories: positive terminology concerning what the ideal person has accomplished, and—by far the greater number of instances—negative vocabulary relating what such a person has eliminated or overcome.

We find a limited set of words in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* for ideal persons and—in verses in which the training that leads to the goal is recommended—for potential ideal persons. The terms that function in this way most often are *muni* (silent one), bhikkhu, and brāhmaṇa. *Dhīra* (wise one), *dhona, santa* (calm one), *vedagū* (knowledgeable one), *vidvā* (knowing one), *vimutta* (released one), *nāga, pāragū* and *pāraṃgata* (one gone beyond), *paṇḍita* (wise one), and *samaṇa* also occur.[8]

Most of these labels communicate something about the qualities and characteristics of the persons they designate, indicating that silence, wisdom, calmness, knowledge, and the like are exemplary features of ideal persons; indeed, these characteristics have been adopted to epitomize such persons. The remainder of the positive terminology relating to these persons emerges in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s descriptions of ideal persons' positive characteristics and in specific recommendations to persons who would strive to attain this ideal.

According to the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* ideal persons are mindful *(sata, satimā).* Their primary positive characteristics have to do with seeing and knowing. As we have seen, an ideal person sees *viveka* (seclusion, v. 851) and *khema* (security, v. 809); such a person has open eyes (v. 921), yet is not visually greedy (v. 922) and has downcast eyes (v. 972). Thus such a one controls vision and minimizes distraction. Observation of the unhappy consequences of less-than-ideal behavior provides a strong

motivation to strive for the ideal (e.g., vv. 777, 817). Seeing is both the final prerequisite for attaining the goal (v. 915) and the ideal condition itself (v. 795).

The importance of knowing is clear in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* both as a means to the goal and as an attribute of the ideal person. Several terms in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* signify knowing and knowledge or wisdom, such as *paññā* (wisdom), *ñatvā* (having known), many other forms of *jānāti* (to know), *veda* (knowledge), and *vidvā* (knowing—an old perfect active participle in *-vas*). Wisdom frees one from illusions (v. 847), and reverence for it leads one to strive for the ideal (v. 969). The ideal person knows dhamma as well as the dangers of less-than-ideal living (e.g., vv. 775, 792, 933, 943, 947). In v. 971 the trainee for the goal is encouraged to "know moderation for the sake of satisfaction here."[9] To know is both the chief means to the goal and the primary characteristic activity of one who has achieved it. To be wise is the highest good. Accordingly, in the one instance of the term "buddha" in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* it functions as an adjective ("awakened"), applied to Gotama. Likewise, *sambodhi* (awakening or enlightenment) refers once in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* to the ideal goal itself, since the trainee for the goal is called "one desirous of awakening" (*sambodhikāma,* v. 963).

In addition to being alert and knowledgeable, the ideal person is unmoved by this seeing and knowing. This notion of equanimity is expressed with forms of *upekkha* and *sama.* Here equanimity is equivalent to mental composure (v. 972) and incompatible with selfish grasping (vv. 855, 911–912). Someone with equanimity is not affected by praise or blame (vv. 895–896). The ideal person is "the same in all circumstances" (v. 952).

Finally, the ideal person is released, liberated. We have seen that the ideal person is freed by wisdom (v. 847) and that such a person is sometimes designated as a *vimutta* (released one). In v. 877 release is said to come after knowledge and is described as concomitant to refraining from arguments. According to v. 975, the mindful person's *citta* (mind) is released. All in all, in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* release is associated with a mental state that is knowledgeable, yet free and not defensive.

Release or freedom, not unlike purity and calmness, defines the ideal person at least partly in negative terms, which leads us to inquire: from what exactly are these persons free? Although goal-referents are scarce and positive terminology rather vague in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* it is full of negative vocabulary, which occurs in both specific ethical injunctions and in a complex, broader teaching against desire and grasping. Almost every sutta of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* includes a number of formulaically reiterated injunctions against particular types of behavior, including indulging in grief, lamentation, envy, greed, anger, false-speaking, doubt, pride, conceit, backbiting, and selfishness.[10]

Desire stands out as the primary problem, according to the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. A strong condemnation of desire—desire in and of itself, desire for particular persons and objects and ideas, all action that naturally follows upon desire (namely, grasping or acquiring), and any dependence that results from action motivated by desire—emerges from the rich and varied vocabulary relating to desire. The *Aṭṭhakavagga* describes a vicious circle of wrong behavior, a self-perpetuating series of events based on indulgence in desire. Once one desires and thereby binds oneself through grasping or attachment, that very bondage increases the likelihood of becoming involved in further attachment and desire. The ideal person desists from all such activity (grasping, attachment); having undermined its cause (desire), such a one eliminates its ill effect (dependence on or bondage to particular persons, objects, and ideas).

In the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* two types of persons are described: ideal and less than ideal. The two modes of living that they represent are contrasted for the benefit of those who would make the transition to the ideal by abandoning the ways of less-than-ideal persons and emulating the ways of ideal persons, thereby attaining the goal themselves. The less-than-ideal sort of life, led by selfish, deluded persons, is marked by desire, personal and interpersonal strife, grief, anxiety, attachment, and dependence. The ideal life, led by knowledgeable persons who clearly see life and the world as it unfolds and who live in accordance with wisdom, is characterized by harmony and calmness, purified of the negative qualities of ordinary life.

The goal described here is anthropocentric and individually oriented, in every way; whether one lives in the ideal or less-than-ideal manner is entirely one's own responsibility and affects only oneself. Although we might assume that social harmony naturally would result from everyone following the teachings this text prescribes, this is never cited as a motivation for doing so.[11] Even more significantly, the goal itself consists of living in the ideal way. The means recommended for achieving the ideal —being alert, watchful, and equable; seeing and knowing; avoiding conceit, greed, and slander; rejecting desire; not grasping; being free of dependence on any particular persons and things—are often utilized in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* as descriptions of the defining characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of persons who have achieved the ideal goal. Indeed, the text never describes ideal persons or the condition they have achieved in terms other than these. On the basis of the evidence of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* itself, there is no way to distinguish between ideal and less-than-ideal persons except by the perfect consistency with which ideal persons behave in the ideal ways.

This continuity of path and goal reflects and expresses the continuity of values operative in this account of the ideal goal and how one achieves it. The values remain constant throughout; none is added at

the point of reaching the ideal condition. The same attitudes and actions that are valued as good along the way to the goal, when they are but inconsistently maintained by the aspirant, prove to be valued as good ultimately, when they are maintained consistently by the ideal person.

*Two Approaches to the Goal*

The *Aṭṭhakavagga* emphasizes the problematic nature of desire and attachment. One object of desire that it singles out for special attention is view *(diṭṭhi)*. In the first instance of the term, v. 781 says:

> How could one who is led by desire, intent on what s/he prefers,
> fulfilling his/her own [expectations],
> overcome his/her very own view?
> Just as that one would know, so would s/he preach.[12]

Here the *Aṭṭhakavagga* treats a less-than-ideal person's espousal of a particular view as a manifestation of desire. Due to desire, one prefers one view over all others and thus prevents oneself from seeing the truth and becoming truly knowledgeable. There is no worse barrier to mindful seeing than the belief that one has already seen and known fully.

Further, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* indicates that such a person prefers a view that legitimates and reinforces his or her desires. The less-than-ideal person substitutes a particular view for a direct apprehension of reality. If one does not refer to reality directly as its own truth, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* implies, one's only criterion for choosing among the competing formulations of truth is selfish desire: which view best states what one wishes were true? When one has found such a view, one will defend it with conviction born not of personal and direct apprehension of the truth, but rather of the fact that it meets that primary selfish criterion. Hence attachment to views epitomizes the viciously circular, self-perpetuating nature of desire, attachment, and dependence in general. A good number of verses in the text dwell on this topic, elucidating the dangerous consequences of attachment to views, such as being drawn constantly into quarrels and disputes, losing one's composure, and selfishly denigrating those whose views differ from one's own.

Several verses condemn all relative ranking of and preference *(purakkhata)* for things and people. This follows logically from the notion that desire and attachment are major obstacles to achieving the ideal goal. To evaluate any one thing or person as superior to another, this reasoning implies, is to indulge in desire and exclusive attachment. The *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s strong condemnation of attachment to *diṭṭhi* represents an application of this principle to preference for particular ideas and theories, as is evident in v. 796:

> In contrast to what a person stuck in views calls "highest,"
> and considers to be supreme in the world,
> all else is "inferior,"
> therefore s/he has not gone past disputes.[13]

Despite the anti-*diṭṭhi* condemnation of all preference and relative ranking, v. 969 presents preference in a positive light:

> Having preferred wisdom, having joy in [what is] lovely,
> one should destroy those dangers.[14]

In addition, the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s disapproval (e.g., vv. 796–798) of holding one thing as supreme *(parama, uttari)* and of considering some persons superior to others clashes with its recommendation in v. 822 that one train in *viveka* (seclusion), since that is the highest *(uttama)* practice for noble ones *(ariyas).*

There is a certain ranking in the very identification of particular persons as ideal and others as less than ideal. Thus it is not surprising that the text's anti-*diṭṭhi* position introduces some inconsistencies into its treatment of exemplary persons. Some verses cite experts or skilled ones *(kusalas)* as authorities, indicating that their words are truthful and should evoke respect (e.g., vv. 782, 783, 798, 830). Yet other verses, concerned with the *diṭṭhi* issue, refer to *kusalas* as argumentative fools (vv. 878, 879, 885). In addition, vv. 866 and 868 refer respectfully to the *samaṇa* as the teacher of dhammas (truths), and numerous verses portray brāhmaṇas as exemplary ideal persons (e.g., vv. 790, 802, 843, 911). But *samaṇas* are also portrayed as argumentative and closed-minded preachers (vv. 828, 883), while v. 859 groups *samaṇas* and brāhmaṇas with common persons and depicts their teaching activities as less than ideal.

In terms of specific actions, we have seen that v. 822 recommends training in seclusion as the highest practice for noble ones. We have also noted that the *Aṭṭhakavagga* frequently emphasizes seeing and knowing as the key attributes of an ideal person. Considering the text's numerous positive references to seeing, one might be surprised at its vehemently negative treatment of *diṭṭhi,* since the notion of a view is at least related to the process of seeing. Yet it is easy enough to infer the rationale underlying this argument. Although seeing is a good thing—leading to the goal, even constituting the goal, if it is done well—formulation of that vision into a view somehow betrays the value of it. However, in presenting the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* occasionally takes the condemnation of views even further, to include seeing itself; it also contains several verses that condemn knowing and knowledge. Verses 788–789 reject knowing as a means to attaining the ideal condition,

while v. 800 relates knowing to forming a view and advises the aspirant against attachment and dependence:

> Having abandoned assumption, not clinging,
> [an ideal person] does not depend even on knowledge.[15]

Verse 909 is the epitome of these verses that deny the efficacy of seeing and knowing as means to the goal:

> A person who sees, sees name and form,
> and having seen, will know them as such.
> Let him/her see as much or as little as s/he likes;
> the experts do not say that [one attains] purity by means of that.[16]

If one ought not to prefer any one teacher, exemplary person, or method for reaching the ideal goal, is there a particular teaching that conveys the ideal? The *Aṭṭhakavagga* wavers on this point, too, as its uses of "dhamma" illustrate. Verse 792 exalts knowing and wisdom and regards "dhamma" as the true teaching. In a number of other verses this term is also used to signify the correct teaching which, when known, frees one from dependence (e.g., vv. 856, 921, 947). Yet in v. 785 "dhamma" signifies a limited view that functions as an object of attachment, and v. 824 indicates that dhammas can be problematic as exclusive, limited teachings:

> They argue "just this is purity,"
> they deny that purity is in other dhammas.[17]

Teachings inherently exclude other teachings. Verse 886 states this directly by noting that if one follows a particular teaching, one inevitably depicts one's own view as true *(sacca)* and all others as false *(musa)*. To follow a particular teaching is to prefer or rank ideas and things in the world—which activity ultimately derives, this argument implies, from desire.

The most striking inconsistency that results from the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument concerns the ideal goal itself. We have just seen that v. 824 depicts less-than-ideal persons as defending their own dhamma in terms of its exclusive claim to purity *(suddhi)*. Similarly, vv. 898 and 906 argue that those who present their teachings or paths as true render purity exclusive and so, the text implies, invalid. If the ideal person is beyond all preferences and holds nothing as beyond or further (v. 795), it follows that s/he does not even prefer purity over impurity, or grasp calmness in preference to anxiety (v. 900). Yet the *Aṭṭhakavagga* itself—attributed to the most exemplary of all ideal persons, the Buddha—draws clear dis-

tinctions between ideal and less-than-ideal persons, practices, and teachings, and definitely teaches that the ideal is ultimately preferable to the less-than-ideal condition.

The specific inconsistencies concerning ideal persons and practices that occur within the teaching recorded in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* verses point to the presence in this text of two different approaches to the ideal. On the one hand, persons strive for an ideal condition that both consists of and is reached through (1) cultivating seeing and knowing, and (2) avoiding attachment and desire. Once they have attained this goal, such ideal persons teach others how to follow a similar path. On the other hand, to prefer certain persons, actions, or views over any others is itself to desire and to be attached. The ideal of desirelessness consists of defending no particular view or path, avoiding argumentation, and living entirely without preference—even for a revered teacher, respected teaching, or ideal condition.

The specific condemnation of attachment to *diṭṭhis* (views) follows logically from the general condemnation of desire. The *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s argument against *diṭṭhis* focuses on this type of attachment as particularly pervasive and dangerous. The issue is not whether one's particular view is true or false, but whether one is attached to any particular view.[18] Presumably, even if one were to discover a true *diṭṭhi*—and this possibility is never explicitly ruled out—aligning oneself with it, to the exclusion of conflicting views, would prevent one from attaining the ideal. In other words, despite all the talk about *diṭṭhis* recorded in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* the discussion is not really about views and opinions, but rather about the formulation and defense of them. As Luis Gómez has observed, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* neither proposes a new view nor systematically rejects all views.[19] What is soundly rejected is attachment to views.

The *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s recommendations of certain means to a goal, exaltation of certain persons as exemplary of the ideal, and descriptions of certain conditions or qualities as of ultimate value raise two types of questions about the viability of the anti-*diṭṭhi* teaching. The first concerns the contradictions between the general anti-desire teaching and the anti-*diṭṭhi* teaching about the nature of the ideal and the path to it. The second concerns the status of the teaching of no-views as a view itself. Doesn't the no-views teaching unavoidably perpetuate the discrimination of "true" and "false" by its own contradiction of the claims—found in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* itself—that certain means lead to a particular ideal and that certain persons are exemplary of that ideal? Can a dhamma that consists of the rejection of all attachment, even to dhammas themselves, be presented coherently in oral or written form? Can the truth, so conceived, ever be expressed in words, as a specific teaching?

Although the latter type of question is a theoretical, intellectual prob-

lem, the former illustrates why it is a serious one, even in a fully practical setting. If one were to endeavor to achieve the ideal by means of the methods set out in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* it would be crucial to be able to discern which means (if any) that text is actually recommending, which persons (if any) are to be regarded as exemplary role models, and which conditions or qualities (if any) one should aim to attain. It is difficult to see how such information could be derived from this teaching without transgressing the general principle, espoused in the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument, that no view, way, teaching, or teacher should be preferred over any other. If "choicelessness" is ideal, then how does one choose what to do?[20]

The danger of attachment to particular views concerning means to the goal, ideal persons, and the nature of the goal itself is the central concern of the anti-*diṭṭhi* teaching. The anti-views argument is not presented in order to replace all previous, untrue teachings with a new, improved teaching.[21] Consequently there is, at least in theory, no place within this teaching for particular advice to the aspirant for the goal. As long as the ideal is held to be complete detachment from preference for particular, exclusive teachings, no authority can be found for recommending that the aspirant follow particular means to particular ends. The view of no-views is a teaching of nonduality. As such, it cannot explicitly deny the validity of views that deny the validity of other views without undermining its own authority.

This paradox brings to mind another that is raised by the Buddhist teachings: the paradox of desire. The parallel amounts to more than mere coincidence of form. Briefly stated, the Buddhist paradox of desire is that desirelessness is ideal, yet one must cultivate one's desire to attain the ideal in order to be motivated to continue to strive for that goal. Every action one performs on the path to the goal is a manifestation of desire. If one is ever to attain desirelessness, it will be by means of desire-driven actions. Although ultimately one strives to be free of all desires, the only way to accomplish this is by means of desire.[22]

The focus of the anti-*diṭṭhi* teaching is, as we have seen, the less-than-ideal nature of attachment to particular views. As a philosophical stance, this teaching leads to self-contradiction in terms of the values it upholds. On the one hand, nonduality is ideal, and any preference for one teaching over another belies true understanding. On the other hand, the duality of desire versus nondesire, or of duality versus nonduality, reflects something real, and the preference for one (nondesire, nonduality) over the other (desire, duality) is ideal. This is simply a radical, extended form of the paradox of desire, in which both desire and the absence of desire are valued. It results from adding a very important component to the teaching that desire is characteristic of the less-than-ideal and must be eradicated in order to attain the goal. That component is views. By extending the objects of desire to include views, this

teaching eventually forces the issue of the paradox of desire. By shifting the focus away from desire for things and people and existence—and toward attachment to views—it brings out the less obvious (and therefore even more troublesome) inconsistency of the teaching that identifies desire as the problem and then fails to show how the desire to end desire is different from any other sort of desire.[23] One cannot ignore the ease with which the anti-views argument is developed here: from the premise that desire is the root of all evil comes the argument that preference for any particular view, path, and even goal is counterproductive on the path to the ideal.

## The Commentaries

### *The Ideal and the Path*

In the course of defining and commenting on the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s soteriological vocabulary, the *Mahāniddesa* commentator and Buddhaghosa present a highly developed understanding of the ideal goal and the path to it. They maintain a certain continuity with the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s outlook, both in their emphasis on desire as the root cause of the problems of the less-than-ideal condition and in their descriptions of the path to the ideal in terms of specific negative actions and attitudes to be overcome by one aspiring to the summum bonum.

These commentators on the *Aṭṭhakavagga* interpret its contrasting depictions of less-than-ideal and ideal persons in terms of a complex path theory. The number of categories of persons goes from two (less than ideal and ideal) to at least three: ordinary persons, persons striving for the ideal, and ideal persons. Frequently these categories are even more numerous, as the commentators distinguish laypeople from monastics; those who might still backslide in their progress toward the ideal from those who have "entered the stream" and are assured of eventually attaining their goal; and those who have entered the stream from those who are "once-returners," "never-returners," and arahants (who have reached the highest goal). The path itself is marked by organized gradations of negative factors eliminated, is called "noble," and is described as eightfold. Here truth is encapsulated in another eightfold formula, that of the four noble truths concerning *dukkha* (discomfort, ill) plus the same four, but substituting *āsavas* (influxes, toxins) for *dukkha*. This constitutes a highly refined, complex soteriology that contrasts sharply with the simple notions of path and goal reflected in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*.[24]

### Diṭṭhi *and the Paradox of Desire*

The *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s anti-*diṭṭhi* position takes to a logical extreme the notion that desire is the root cause of all that is wrong with the less-than-

ideal condition, and concludes that all preferential ranking—even that of spiritual teachers, paths, and ideal goals—is ultimately a form of desire and therefore itself less than ideal. Although it is possible to see how the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument might have arisen from the general anti-desire view, which teaches a particular ideal, the presence of both in one text proves somewhat problematic. The two commentaries we are considering here are almost identical in their treatment of the specific inconsistencies raised by the juxtaposition of these two teachings in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* and of the more theoretical paradox raised by the anti-*diṭṭhi* position itself.

The main difference between the two is that Buddhaghosa writes in a somewhat freer form. Not being limited, like the *Mahāniddesa,* to the task of explaining each term in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* with a separate gloss *(niddesa),* he can introduce new terms and draw connections among different words, lines, and verses. The *Paramatthajotikā II* often records noticeably smoother interpretations of particular verses than does the *Mahāniddesa,* but in most cases it provides a concisely reworded summary of the *Mahāniddesa*'s analysis.

The most problematic claim in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s anti-*diṭṭhi* argument is that preference or ranking is always a form of desire and therefore bad. This is problematic because the text itself clearly prefers some people, activities, and teachings over others. The commentaries encounter this problem even more obviously, since they are filled with complex rankings of types of behavior, persons, and even realms of existence.

The *Mahāniddesa* frequently offers a dual *(taṇhā-diṭṭhi)* definition of terms signifying desire, attachment, and dependence as both thirst *(taṇhā)* for a wide variety of objects and desire for (attachment to) a view *(diṭṭhi).* If this commentary were to follow the example of the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* we would expect it to explain the latter form of desire as the selfish attachment to any particular view. The *Mahāniddesa,* however, is very consistent in its interpretation of this form of desire as desire for specific wrong views, as opposed to allegiance to the one correct teaching (i.e., that of the Buddha).

Verse 781 of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* has already been quoted when examining the questions raised by the anti-*diṭṭhi* position:

> How could one who is led by desire, intent on what s/he prefers,
> fulfilling his/her own [expectations],
> overcome his/her very own view?
> Just as that one would know, so would s/he preach.[25]

The *niddesa* on v. 781 is equally useful for illustrating how the commentaries deal with this issue. It describes attachment to view in two ways. First, it refers to, but does not fully recount, a story in which some

adherents of other sects try to lay the blame for a murder on the Buddha and his followers in order to regain their own lost possessions, fame, respect, and honor. Depicting these people as "having this view, indulgence, will, theory," as "intent on that and desiring that," the gloss says that they are "unable to overcome their own view, indulgence, will, theory, and intention," so their ill-repute returns. Therefore how could they overcome their own view?

Second, the *niddesa* lists ten views that such persons "hold as dogma, have grasped as complete, and so cannot relinquish." These ten views occur often elsewhere in the *Mahāniddesa,* in the following formulaic passage:

> The world is eternal, just this [is] truth, [all] else [is] delusion; the world is ephemeral; the world is finite; the world is infinite; the soul/life-principle [is] the body; the soul/life-principle [is] other than the body; the tathāgata is after death; the tathāgata is not after death; the tathāgata both is and is not after death; the tathāgata neither is nor is not after death—just this [is] truth, [all] else [is] delusion.[26]

Buddhaghosa also refers frequently to this list in the *Paramatthajotikā II.* According to the *Mahāniddesa,* these are the views the persons referred to in v. 781 "hold as dogma," and so forth. It cites these views again in its explanation of the last line of this verse. With reference to the idea that such persons fulfill their own expectations, the *Mahāniddesa* says they "render their views highest, best" and each claims

> This [i.e., my] teacher is omniscient; this teaching is well-taught; this group is well-practiced; this view is good; this way is well-attained; this path leads [one] out [of saṃsāra].[27]

But the problem here, judging from the commentaries' further explanations, is not the same problem the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s anti-*diṭṭhi* argument raised. Here the problem lies in the fact that these particular persons have no right to make these claims precisely because their teacher is not omniscient, their teaching not well taught, and so on, so that their path is not one that leads them out of saṃsāra. Thus the *Mahāniddesa* (re: v. 790) explains that

> The brāhmaṇa does not say [etc.][28] that purity [etc.] is [accomplished] by means of an impure path, a wrong path, a path that does not lead [one] out [of saṃsāra], a path other than the foundations of mindfulness, other than the right exertions, other than the bases of psychic power, other than the faculties, other than the powers, other than the constituents of wisdom, other than the noble eightfold path.[29]

In numerous instances, when the *Aṭṭhakavagga* suttas devoted to explaining the *diṭṭhi* position condemn holding any one thing as highest, the *Mahāniddesa* explains that this means regarding any particular

teacher, teaching, group, view, way, or path as right, and then goes on to attribute such reprehensible activity to persons who follow the wrong teachers, teachings, and so forth! This exemplifies the commentaries' treatment of this issue: when they try to preserve the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s *diṭṭhi* argument, they produce extreme internal inconsistencies, precisely because they have so thoroughly opted for the other version of the teaching in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*—namely, the one that regards certain persons as exemplary and certain teachers as teaching the truth about the valid way to the true highest goal.

The commentaries ignore the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s blanket condemnation of exclusive teachings and focus instead on determining which specific teachings are true and which are false. Thus at six negative instances of the term "dhamma" in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* the *Mahāniddesa* identifies the term with the sixty-two theories *(diṭṭhigatas).*[30] Although the *Mahāniddesa* never lists the sixty-two theories, it refers to them often and frequently treats them as synonymous with the ten wrong views of the "This world is eternal" passage. In other negative instances the commentary defines "dhamma" as "teacher, teaching, group, view, way, or path," explicitly indicating that it is referring to teachers, teachings, followers, and paths other than the Buddha, dhamma, saṅgha, and noble eightfold path. Where the *Aṭṭhakavagga* uses "dhamma" positively, the commentary delineates the specific contents of this one true teaching, namely

> All *saṃkhāras* [(tendencies, compositions) are] impermanent; all *saṃkhāras* [are] *dukkha;* all dhammas [are] without self; *saṃkhāras* [are] dependent on ignorance; consciousness [is] dependent on *saṃkhāras;* name-form [is] dependent on consciousness; the six organs and objects of sense . . . ; touch . . . ; feelings . . . ; thirst . . . ; grasping . . . ; existence . . . ; birth . . . ; old age [and] death . . . ; cessation of *saṃkhāras* [is] due to cessation of ignorance; cessation of consciousness [is] due to cessation of *saṃkhāras;* [etc.] . . . cessation of old age [and] death [is] due to cessation of birth; this is *dukkha;* this is arising of *dukkha;* this is cessation of *dukkha;* this is the way leading to cessation of *dukkha;* these are *āsavas;* [etc.] . . . this is the way leading to the cessation of *āsavas;* these dhammas should be known; these dhammas should be understood; these dhammas should be abandoned; these dhammas should be cultivated; these dhammas should be realized; [there is] arising and disappearance, enjoyment, danger, and going out of the five contact spheres; [there is] arising and disappearance, enjoyment, danger, and going out of the five grasping [sensory] substrata; there is arising and disappearance, enjoyment, danger, and going out of the four great elements; whatever is capable of arising, all that is destructible.[31]

As for the particular means to the goal, the commentaries elaborate easily on the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s positive uses of terms related to seeing and knowing. For example, the *niddesa* on v. 837 explains that the person

who sees does not grasp views. The reason for this is not that the very act of grasping any view is itself less than ideal, but rather that this ideal person sees the dangerous consequences of grasping the views described in the "This world is eternal" passage, since they are characterized by *dukkha,* are not conducive to nibbāna, are conducive to continued becoming and rebirth in the unhappy realms, and are impermanent, interdependently arisen, and subject to cessation.

The commentaries' methods of avoiding concurrence with the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s strongest condemnation of seeing and knowing are evident in their comments on v. 909:

> A person who sees, sees name and form,
> and having seen, will know them as such.
> Let her/him see as much or as little as s/he likes;
> the experts do not say that [one attains] purity by means of that.[32]

The *Mahāniddesa* simply defines this seeing and knowing as imperfect and inaccurate, thus leaving open the possibility of an accurate vision and knowledge that could see and know name-form *(nāma-rūpa)* as it really is and thus could lead to purity *(suddhi).*

Like the *Mahāniddesa,* the *Paramatthajotikā II* redefines old terms and—adding to the *Mahāniddesa*'s argument—introduces new ones to render v. 909 compatible with the ongoing commentarial interpretation:

> Who saw by means of knowledge of others' minds [etc.], that person who sees, sees name and form, and having seen other than that [i.e., other than (the true nature of) name and form], will know those names and forms as permanent and happy and not otherwise; thus seeing, let her/him see as much or as little name and form as permanent and happy as s/he likes; the experts do not say [one attains] purity by means of such a seeing *(dassana)* as hers/his.[33]

Thus the commentaries interpret the lines, "A person who sees, sees name and form,/and having seen, will know them as such" as saying, "[That person] does not see name and form, and knows them as they are not"—which is no mean accomplishment.

Certain verses of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* illustrate the logical conclusion of the anti-*diṭṭhi* theory in their negative assessments of the very attributes and accomplishments which the remainder of that text uses to define the ideal. Thus v. 794 says that ideal persons do not preach eternal purity. The *Mahāniddesa* handles this particular conflicting verse in a radical way, explaining that " 'eternal purity' means not-eternal purity, saṃsāra purity, ineffective purity, eternalism."[34] This presents a coherent argument—namely, that when less-than-ideal persons preach about eternal purity they are mistaken and are really talking about eternalism,

not purity in the highest sense. Truly ideal persons, it implies, really do preach true, eternal purity. Yet this interpretation radically alters the *Aṭṭhakavagga* by stating that *accanta* (eternal) means *anaccanta* (not eternal), and in the process contradicts the point of the orginal verse, which is that exemplary persons do not preach or issue claims about the highest goal at all.

The *Paramatthajotikā II,* too, contradicts the *Aṭṭhakavagga* at v. 794, but in a slightly more subtle manner. Instead of simply substituting "not-eternal" for "eternal" in the line, "They do not preach 'eternal purity,' " Buddhaghosa remarks, "They do not preach supreme eternal purity as if it were the eternal purity of the ignorant eternalist view,"[35] but the end result is the same.

According to the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s condemnation of holding particular views, no one should prefer one condition over another, for to do so is to discriminate, desire, and grasp. This is where the critical value of this position lies, because it points out the paradox inherent in the very ideal of desirelessness. The *Mahāniddesa*'s comment on v. 900 spells out the Theravāda treatment of this issue, by claiming that one must desire in order to become desireless. Commenting on the lines

> Not longing for purity (or) impurity,
> one should fare detached, not having grasped calmness,[36]

it states that persons training for the highest goal first long for entry into the path. Having accomplished that, they then long for the highest goal, arahantship. But arahants themselves do not long for any of the things called "purity" or "impurity."

This hierarchy interprets accomplishment of the goal according to the idea that training in the path is to arahantship what pre-path entry is to path training. It thus renders the transition from less than ideal to ideal parallel to the initial taking up of the path. This reasoning transforms the original, uncompromising anti-*diṭṭhi* argument's condemnation of discriminating anything as ideal compared to anything else into the observation that one does not desire what one has already attained. Ordinary persons want to enter the path; those who have accomplished that desire the next step: arahantship. But arahants have attained the ultimate goal, so there is nothing left for them to desire.

This amounts to saying that the ideal person's lack of desire is merely an incidental consequence of her/his attainment of the ideal. In the context of v. 900, this comment interprets the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s negative assessment of longing for purity, as distinct from impurity, as the claim that once one has attained purity, one no longer desires it as distinct from its opposite. But this interpretation certainly does not condemn the trainees' desire for this specific ideal condition. On the contrary, it

indicates that the trainees' desire is necessary and effective. Finally, where the original verse says one should not grasp calmness, the *Mahāniddesa* takes "calmness" to connote a limited, nonideal calmness rather than the true highest calmness, which we can infer is a legitimate object of longing for those training on the path to it.

The *Aṭṭhakavagga* simply presents two approaches to the ideal without any attempt to resolve the inconsistencies that result. To explain the teaching recorded in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* as true (consistent, coherent), the *Mahāniddesa* and the *Paramatthajotikā II* must somehow integrate both approaches. The two commentaries accomplish this in similar ways. In some of their definitions of the ideal person, and in their comments on certain anti-*diṭṭhi* verses, the commentaries superficially preserve the basic tension introduced by the anti-*diṭṭhi* position's negative critique of desire for anything, including the ideal goal. But for the most part the commentaries relegate such paradoxical elements of the Buddhist teaching to the realm of the perfected ideal person.

In this interpretation, the notion of pure desirelessness belongs to the ideal alone. Persons who have not yet achieved the ideal desire it as a matter of course. The commentators appear to assume that the fact that this may be paradoxical has no practical bearing on the path to the goal. It is for these aspirants to the goal that the commentaries define all paths, teachings, teachers, and goals other than their own as less than ideal, and their own as ideal. Similarly, the *Mahāniddesa* and the *Paramatthajotikā II* seem to assume that ideal persons may indeed have no need to express the truth, over and above the views of others. But the Buddha and his followers, who are interested in sharing their accomplishments with others, must do so by teaching the truth and by instilling a desire for the ideal in their followers. Thus the commentaries pay lip service to the anti-*diṭṭhi* claims while, at a deeper level, they radically transform this teaching by means of a "present company excepted" interpretation.

*Theravāda Soteriology and the Paradox of Desire*

The *Aṭṭhakavagga* both teaches a basic Buddhist soteriology, oriented toward the gradual elimination of desire, and presents—in its anti-*diṭṭhi* argument—an effective challenge to the legitimacy of any soteriology. This juxtaposition of views in an early Buddhist text is of historic interest, in part because it renders questionable the traditional Theravāda claim to preservation and consistent interpretation of the earliest version of the teachings of the Buddha. More significantly, this text, accepted and revered by the Theravāda as the word of the Buddha, clearly anticipates one of the most significant challenges the Mahāyāna would issue, centuries later, to the Theravāda understanding of the highest ideal and the path to it. Applying the paradox of desire, this cri-

tique asks why the ideal goal itself should be exempt from the fundamental condemnation of desirous attachment to all objects and conditions. If desire is characteristic of less-than-ideal persons and is left behind by ideal persons, how can desire for the ideal goal be salvific? The core of this critical application of the paradox of desire lies in the claim that every exclusive formulation of truth is an expression of selfish attachment that mistakenly posits a distinction between "true" and "false." Thus no one view (or teacher, practice, teaching, etc.) can distinguish itself as exclusively true.

It was Nāgārjuna, of course, who took up this argument anew in his formulation of the Mādhyamika interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. There he criticized the Theravāda (and other pre-Mahāyāna schools) for ignoring this important implication of the Buddha's teachings. Using his famous negative dialectic, Nāgārjuna interpreted those teachings as advocating a negative critique of all conceptual constructions; he argued that this negative critique does not thereby make its own specific conceptual claims. Thus he took the Buddha's teachings to be special by virtue of their ability to point toward a higher truth, without taking them to be conceptually substantial or exclusive. The *Aṭṭhakavagga* clearly presents the setup of this critique in its anti-*diṭṭhi* argument, adamantly condemning any attachment to exclusive individual views, but it does not anticipate Nāgārjuna's resolution of the problem.[37] Instead, it simply records two paths to the goal—one that focuses on eliminating desire by means of cultivating specific types of behavior, following the example of certain ideal persons, and another that recommends the elimination of desire by complete disassociation from any particular view, path, teacher, or goal. It includes no attempt to integrate the two into one coherent path.

It is impossible to determine, by analyzing the *Aṭṭhakavagga* itself, any chronological or even theoretical/doctrinal sequence of the development of these two approaches to the goal. Although we can speculate that one of the teachings follows logically on the other, the internal evidence provides no clear, objective basis for distinguishing which teaching precedes the other historically. Further, one certainly cannot presume to conclude from a study of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* alone whether either or both of these views actually represents the authentic teaching of the Buddha.

An analysis of the contents and structure of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* does show that one sample of what could be the earliest layer of Buddhist literature records a doctrinal conflict of the sort that proves quite significant in the later history of Buddhism. The *Aṭṭhakavagga* contains both the basic ideas of what would become a full-fledged soteriology in the Theravāda tradition, and the seeds of the attitude toward views and particular teachings that Nāgārjuna, for one, would later develop into a new Buddhist philosophy, and that the Zen masters would apply some-

what ruthlessly to their would-be disciples.[38] In a certain sense, even the Pure Land schools of Buddhism address the question of how one can act effectively to attain the highest goal, given the practical quandary posed by the paradox of desire.[39] In other words, an analysis of the soteriological stance(s) of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* indicates that one point of doctrinal disagreement that would later divide the major schools of Buddhism may date from the earliest layer of this tradition.

Tracing the development of the Theravāda response to the anti-*diṭṭhi* challenge raised by the *Aṭṭhakavagga* through examination of the two major normative Theravāda commentaries on this text, we have found evidence of some development of the Theravāda path soteriology, and in this development we have discovered the Theravāda resolution of the paradox of desire. As we have seen, this paradox, raised implicitly by the presence of the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* lies in the observation that any effort to become desireless itself belies a very basic desire: to attain this ideal of desirelessness. The commentaries' treatment of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s anti-*diṭṭhi* argument shows that the Theravāda generally finds the full anti-*diṭṭhi* response to this quandary untenable. To accept fully that resolution of the paradox of desire would require that it neither regard the Buddha as exemplary nor espouse his teachings as ultimately accurate and normative.

The Theravāda clearly did not recognize this solution—which would leave one with no path to the goal—as a solution at all. Instead, the commentaries opt to undermine the anti-*diṭṭhi* position, in order to retain the example of the Buddha and the guidance of his teachings. They accept the teachings concerning the path and the goal literally, and in the process accept the paradox inherent in them. This is exemplified by the *Mahāniddesa*'s comment on v. 900 of the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* which explains that trainees for the ideal aspire for entrance to the path and that entrants to the path long for arahantship, but that arahants do not hold anything as ideal. This implies that desire for the goal is a necessary part of the path to it, and also that those who desire anything other than path entry or arahantship (and thus nibbāna) do not qualify as Buddhist trainees; they are common folk whose objects of desire are less worthy than these. Such lower goals constitute the desire that entraps one in the less-than-ideal condition, while the higher desire, for attainment of the ideal goal, actually helps to raise one from that condition.[40]

Although it weakens the condemnation of desire that lies at the base of the early Buddhist worldview, this Theravāda resolution of the paradox of desire proves successful, philosophically speaking.[41] Challenged to show why preference for the teaching of one particular person (the Buddha) should be a good tendency when that teaching itself denounces desire as the root of all evil and such preference as a form of desire, the Theravāda eventually replies: because it is effective. Theoretically, this

may be paradoxical, but it is not contradictory, and from a practical point of view, it is realistic. In practice, such preference is conducive to attainment of the highest good, which renders it—by definition—good.

Thus analysis of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* reveals that, although the Theravāda tradition's historical claims to the sole possession and only accurate interpretation of the earliest teachings of the Buddha may be questioned, its response to this particular, philosophically problematic issue manages to resolve it. When faced with the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s evidence that the Buddha taught two incompatible teachings, the Theravāda opted for one and reinterpreted the other so as to contradict its original intent, thus rendering it consistent with what the Theravāda saw as the greater whole of the teaching.

The power of the Theravāda argument for this somewhat radical measure derives from its direct link with the experiential or empirical basis of Buddhist doctrine.[42] The paradox of desire relates, at least potentially, to every person's experience of the path to the highest goal. The Theravāda resolves that, paradoxical though it may be, the effectiveness of this path is proven by the successful practice of exemplary persons who have followed it. The paradox of desire challenges the very purpose of any path in Buddhism. The Theravāda treats this as a practical challenge that calls for a practical resolution.

## Notes

1. With the possible exception of some Tibetan Buddhists, who accept all of the recorded scriptures of the Theravāda (and other "Hīnayāna" schools), Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna as the authentic record of the Buddha's words, "All the canonical Sūtras and Tantras which form the basis of Buddha-dharma in Tibet were taught by Lord Buddha in person" (His Holiness Tenzin Gyatsho, the XIVth Dalai Lama of Tibet, *The Opening of the Wisdom Eye* [Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, 1966], 10.) But even the great Vajrayāna philosophers of Tibet used later teachings to remedy the deficiencies of earlier texts.

2. See M. Anesaki, "Sutta-Nipāta in Chinese," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 5 (1906-1907): 50-51, and N. A. Jayawickrama, "The Vaggas of the Sutta Nipāta," *University of Ceylon Review* 6 (October 1948): 236.

3. See Jayawickrama, "Vaggas," pp. 229-232.

4. See Sylvain Lévi, *Journal Asiatique* (1915): 401ff.; Anesaki, "Sutta-Nipāta," pp. 50-51; and Jayawickrama, "Vaggas," pp. 233-235 for examples and discussions of such references.

5. In this analysis, the terms "goal," "purpose," "ideal condition," and the like represent the condition that the text portrays as ultimately good, the summum bonum for which one should strive. Also, "positive" and "negative" in this context refer to "good" and "bad," respectively, judged by comparison to this ideal.

6. *Nibbānam attano.* There is no explicit reference to the Buddhist doctrine of anattā. When the term *"atta"* appears, it either functions reflexively (as in this example) or connotes something taken up, an assumption. Cf. N. A. Jaya-

wickrama, "Sutta Nipāta: Some Suttas from the Aṭṭhaka Vagga," *University of Ceylon Review* 8 (October 1950): 248, 249. In my translations, I have used forms that avoid the assumption that the persons (whether ideal or less than ideal) referred to in these verses are male. I can find no indication in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* that any of these descriptions or pieces of advice apply exclusively to males.

7. V. 915cd: *Kathaṃ disvā nibbāti bhikkhu/anupādiyāno lokasmiṃ kiñci.* Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Pali in this essay are my own. Despite the recent plethora of translations of the *Sutta-nipāta,* I still find V. Fausböll's literal and straightforward early translation most useful (*The Sutta-Nipāta: A Collection of Discourses,* Sacred Books of the East, vol. 10, pt. 2 [Oxford: Clarendon, 1881]). Of the newer translations, H. Saddhatissa's is the most readable and K. R. Norman's the most interesting for its presentation of possible variant translations (*The Sutta-Nipāta,* trans. H. Saddhatissa [London: Curzon, 1985]; *The Rhinoceros Horn and Other Early Buddhist Poems (Sutta Nipāta),* trans. K. R. Norman, with alternative translations by I. B. Horner and Walpola Rahula [London: Pali Text Society, 1984].)

8. The translations offered parenthetically come from the literal meaning of these terms, where this can be surmised. In many cases, they are adjectives functioning as substantives, which makes literal interpretation of them possible. The terms that seem to refer to these persons *qua* exemplary persons pose a more difficult translation problem. "Bhikkhu," "brāhmaṇa," and *"samaṇa"* convey no clear literal meaning and thus must be taken to signify something like "monk," "wanderer," "ascetic," or "recluse." Jayawickrama argues that *"dhona"* cannot mean "wise one," as the commentaries interpret it (see "Some Suttas from the Aṭṭhaka Vagga," pp. 247–248). For a definition and etymology of *"nāga,"* see A. F. Hoernle, "The Sutta Nipata in a Sanskrit Version from Eastern Turkestan," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1916): 722–723.

9. *Mattaṃ so jaññā idha tosanatthaṃ* (v. 971b).

10. See, e.g., vv. 809, 862, 866, and 951. Only the *Mahāviyūhasutta* fails to mention any of this type of recommendation.

11. Cf. Karl H. Potter, *Presuppositions of Indian Philosophies* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 259:

> So accepted is the distinction between egoism and altruism that it hardly seems possible to question its legitimacy. Yet the Indians did not recognize this distinction as particularly important and certainly not as obvious. Their assumption is that the good of all is served by the enlargement of a person's concern for himself, for his self eventually encompasses all selves.

In the specifically Theravāda Buddhist context, it would be more accurate to say that the good of all is served by the person's seeing to his or her own improvement, both because one cannot truly help anyone else until one sees the true nature of reality and because the conditions of all individuals are interdependent. Cf. Roy Perrett, "Egoism, Altruism and Intentionalism in Buddhist Ethics," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 15 (1987): 71–85.

12. V. 781: *Sakaṃ hi diṭṭhiṃ katham accayeyya/chandānunīto ruciyā niviṭṭho/sayaṃ samattāni pakubbamāno/yathā hi jāneyya tathā vadeyya.*

13. V. 796: *Paraman ti diṭṭhīsu paribbasāno/yad uttariṃkurute jantu loke/hīnā ti aññe tato sabba-m-āha/tasmā vivādāni avītivatto.*

14. V. 969ab: *Paññaṃ purakkhatvā kalyāṇapīti/vikkhambhaye tāni parissayāni.*

15. V. 800ab: *Attaṃ pahāya anupādiyāno/ñāṇe pi so nissayam no karoti.*

16. V. 909: *Passaṃ naro dakkhiti nāmarūpaṃ/disvāna vāññassati tāni-m-eva/kāmaṃ bahuṃ passatu appakaṃ vā/na hi tena suddhiṃ kusalā vadanti.*

17. V. 824ab: *Idh eva suddhi iti vādiyanti/nāññesu dhammesu visuddhim āhu.*

18. Cf. Luis O. Gómez, "Proto-Mādhyamika in the Pali Canon," *Philosophy East and West* 26 (April 1976), n. 55.

19. Ibid., p. 146.

20. Cf. ibid., n. 57: "this 'choicelessness' creates a problem for the formulation of directives in the path."

21. Cf. ibid., p. 146.

22. Cf. A. L. Herman's description of this paradox ("A Solution to the Paradox of Desire in Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West* 29 [January 1979]: 91): "If I desire to cease desiring then I have not ceased all desire after all; I have merely replaced one species of desiring by another. The paradox of desire points to the practical contradiction or frustration involved in the desire to stop all desiring and states simply that those who desire to stop all desiring will never be successful."

23. This problem is evident in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* terminology of desire. In v. 963 the trainee for the ultimate goal is called *sambodhikāma* (desirous of enlightenment), lending one of the primary terms for desire in this text *(kāma)* a positive significance. Cf. the *Kāmasutta* (vv. 766–771), where all desire is deemed unsuitable and no such allowance for a middle term (i.e., desire *for something*) is made.

24. For more on this topic, see Grace G. Burford, *Desire, Death, and Goodness: The Conflict of Ultimate Values in Theravāda Buddhism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), esp. chaps. 5 and 7.

25. V. 781: *Sakaṃ hi diṭṭhiṃ katham accayeyya/chandānunīto ruciyā niviṭṭho/sayaṃ samattāni pakubbamāno/yathā hi jāneyya tathā vadeyya.*

26. *Sassato loko, idam eva saccaṃ mogham aññam, asassato loko, antavā loko, anantavā loko, taṃ jīvaṃ tam sarīram, aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṃ, hoti tathāgato parammaraṇā, na hoti tathāgato parammaraṇā, hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato parammaraṇā, n' eva hoti na na hoti tathāgato parammaraṇā, idam va saccaṃ, mogham aññan ti.*

27. *Ayaṃ satthā sabbaññū, ayaṃ dhammo svākkhāto, ayaṃ gaṇo supaṭipanno, ayaṃ diṭṭhi bhaddikā, ayaṃ paṭipadā supaññattā, ayaṃ maggo niyyāniko ti.* It is interesting to note that the specific claims the *Mahāniddesa* attributes to these less-than-ideal viewholders include most of the same areas in which inconsistencies arise in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* as a result of its teaching of the *diṭṭhi* position: teacher, teaching (dhamma), path.

28. Here the commentary offers a standard string of synonyms for the verb.

29. *Brāhmaṇo aññena asuddhimaggena micchāpaṭipadāya aniyyānapathena aññatra satipaṭṭhānehi aññatra sammappadhānehi aññatra iddhippādehi aññatra indriyehi aññatra balehi aññatra bojjhaṅgehi aññatra ariyaṭṭhaṅgikamaggena, suddhiṃ visuddhiṃ parisuddhiṃ muttiṃ vimuttiṃ parimuttiṃ, n' āha na katheti na bhaṇati na dīpayati na voharati.*

30. At vv. 784a, 785b, 801d, 803b, 837b, 907b.

31. *Sabbe saṃkhārā aniccā; sabbe saṃkhārā dukkhā; sabbe dhammā anattā; avijjāpaccayā saṃkhārā; saṃkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ; viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ; nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ; saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso; phassapaccayā vedanā; vedanāpaccayā taṇhā; taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ; upādānapaccayā bhavo; bhavapaccayā jāti; jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ; avijjānirodhā saṃkhāranirodho; saṃkhāranirodhā viññāṇanirodho; viññāṇanirodhā nāmarūpanirodho; nāmarūpanirodhā saḷāyatananirodho; saḷāyatananirodhā phassanirodho; phassanirodhā vedanānirodho; vedanānirodhā taṇhānirodho; taṇhānirodhā upādānanirodho; upādānanirodhā bhavanirodho; bhavanirodhā jātinirodho; jātinirodhā jarāmaraṇanirodho; idaṃ dukkhaṃ; ayaṃ dukkhasamudayo; ayaṃ dukkhanirodho; ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā; ime āsavā; ayaṃ āsavasamudayo; ayaṃ āsavanirodho; ayaṃ āsavanirodhagāminī paṭipadā; ime dhammā abhiññeyyā, pariññeyyā, pahātabbā,*

*bhāvetabbā, sacchikātabbā; channaṃ phassāyatanānaṃ samudayañ ca atthaṇgamañ ca assādañ ca ādīnavañ ca nissaraṇañ ca; pañcannaṃ upādānakkhandhānaṃ . . . ; catunnaṃ mahābhūtānaṃ . . . ; yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabban taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ.*

32. See n. 16 above.

33. *Yv āyaṃ paracittañāṇādīhi addakkhi so passan naro dakkhiti nāmarūpaṃ tato paraṃ disvāna vāññassati tāni-m-eva nāmarūpāni niccato sukhato vā na aññathā; so evaṃ passanto kāmaṃ bahuṃ passatu appakaṃ vā nāmarūpaṃ niccato sukhato ca ath' assa evarūpena dassanena na hi tena suddhiṃ kusalā vadanti.*

34. *Accantasuddhī ti anaccantasuddhiṃ saṃsārasuddhiṃ akiriyasuddhiṃ sassatavādaṃ.*

35. *Paramattha-accantasuddhiṃ yeva akiriyasassatadiṭṭhi accantasuddhī ti na te vadanti.* Literally: they do not call highest eternal purity "unwise eternal view eternal purity."

36. V. 900cd: *Suddhī asuddhī ti apatthayāno/virato care santim anuggahāya.*

37. Cf. Gómez, "Proto-Mādhyamika," p. 149.

38. The contemporary Thai Buddhist reformer Buddhadāsa also seems to espouse the anti-*diṭṭhi* notion, as well as its problematic ramifications, within the Theravāda path to the ideal. See Donald K. Swearer, "Bhikkhu Buddhadāsa on Ethics and Society," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 7 (Spring 1979): 60.

39. Cf. Alfred Bloom, *Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965), 30: "Shinran came to the conclusion that it was entirely impossible for a person to do a good act. Whatever good deed he appeared to do on the finite level was still evil, because it was done with a calculation in mind and was ultimately intended to redound to his benefit. Thus all good deeds performed by individuals were seen as essentially self-centered and involved in the entire web of passion."

40. This distinction is spelled out in the *Ariyapariyesana* (26th) sutta of the *Majjhimanikāya,* where desire for nibbāna is said to be different from desire for all other (i.e., conditioned) objects. Unlike desire for anything conditioned, desire for the unconditioned (nibbāna) is a noble *(ariya)* desire.

41. Cf. Herman, "A Solution," p. 92, where he rejects this resolution "because Buddhists themselves seem to reject it" in all its forms and functions.

42. Cf. the equally practical (and paradoxical), if different, Zen resolution described in ibid., pp. 92–94.

# Attainment through Abandonment: The Sarvāstivādin Path of Removing Defilements

COLLETT COX

## Introduction

Even a cursory examination of religious praxis as described by the northern Indian Abhidharma texts reveals an exceedingly complex array of specific practices and attainments. The organizational patterns and exhaustive analysis that characterize Abhidharma texts in their treatment of all aspects of Buddhist doctrine reach a hypertrophic extreme in the case of the all-inclusive path-structure (mārga) into which this array of practices and attainments was incorporated. As elaborated by the later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika school, this path-structure encompasses: numerous meditative states, cosmic realms, or cognitive stages; varieties of religious aspirants associated with each state, realm, or stage; specific techniques of religious practice; and, finally, attainments and powers that appear with these practices. Interpreting this intricate collection of affective and cognitive powers and attainments is a daunting and seemingly overwhelming task.

In addition to clarifying the function and significance of the various specific components of the path, a comprehensive interpretation of the path would, ideally, elucidate certain underlying historical and structural issues. Historically, the later Abhidharma texts adopted both terminology and structures for religious praxis from prior Buddhist accounts. In doing so, they attempted to incorporate rather than delete anything that may have been redundant or even contradictory. Consequently, many components of the path described in the Abhidharma texts contain the same factors or overlap in function. A systematic appraisal of the Sarvāstivādin path must therefore consider the following historical issues.

First, what were the specific sources for the components used to construct the Abhidharma path of praxis, and how did their operation or

importance change, through association with other components, when they were incorporated into an expanding path-structure? Indeed, how feasible is it to answer this question, since doing so is limited by the degree to which text-historical and philological methods can be applied to the available materials? Second, how far can we proceed in the recovery and reconstruction of the religious and socio-historical intentions underlying the development of the path-structure? Can we presume that religious praxis was intended to conform to the path-structure described in Abhidharma texts, or were the Abhidharma descriptions the result of other concerns? Third, is there no dichotomy between doctrinal description and praxis in Abhidharma texts, but only the record of a shift in soteriology, which equated the analytical with the religious quest? If so, what does the available internal and external historical evidence (including evidence outside the Abhidharma texts themselves) allow us to conclude about the activities of those involved in the composition and transmission of Abhidharma texts?

In the spectrum between the extremes of philosophical speculation and effective praxis, a multiplicity of motives undoubtedly influenced these texts, including mediated religious motives such as the desire of sect members to assert sectarian identity by revising, expanding, and defending their canonical tradition vis-à-vis those of rival groups. Although modern scholars often regard these concerns as secondary to what are assumed to have been fundamental religious motives, we should not underestimate the actuality and immediacy of such concrete historical issues for the bearers of these traditions.

When viewed structurally, the complexity of the path also suggests a diversity of religious contexts and objectives. Even within the confines of a single Abhidharma text by a known author, the practices described are so diverse that they could hardly be followed by a single person. Indeed, by associating specific modes of practice with types of aspirants, the Abhidharma texts apparently offer not a single course but a set of parallel options for religious praxis. This complexity raises a number of important structural problems.

First, is it possible to identify a single underlying objective or principle that organizes the multifaceted components of the path, or to identify one component of the path as primary? If so, what is the intrinsic principle or inherent order that coordinates all the components and directs them toward this single ultimate objective? Second, should we assume instead that the apparent "structure" of the path in later Abhidharma texts is a product of self-conscious doctrinal systematization secondarily applied to a traditional aggregate of historical accretions, and that this structure therefore stems from doctrinal demands for coherence quite divorced from the expectations of actual practice? In other words, are the structure and elaboration of the path based on

principles of practice or of doctrinal analysis? Or, third, does this path-structure indicate a bifurcation of religious life into an elite, intellectual, monastic enterprise that was superimposed on and parallel to an inherited, less systematic religious praxis? In this case as well, the later Abhidharma path-structure would represent the culmination of a tendency inherent within the earlier stages of Abhidharma—namely, the wish to provide an all-inclusive, taxonomically complete presentation of the doctrine, not simply for pedagogical purposes but as a direct form of soteriologically effective action.

Given the complexity of the path and the historical and structural issues that this complexity yields, interpretation cannot begin from the naive assumption that the path is an ahistorical harmonious whole, but must recognize both the diverse origins of the various components of the path and the existence of objectives in addition to the one claimed for the path as a whole. Concentrating on a single aspect of the path inevitably distorts the interpretation of the structural whole, whereas concentrating on the whole obscures the history of its development and fails to emphasize properly those components that may be most important in actual practice. Further, from the viewpoint of individual practitioners, the integrating path-structure may be only a heuristic and nominal overlay, whereas from the viewpoint of Abhidharma masters, the distinctions in practice may be negligible and readily harmonized. Thus interpretation of the Abhidharma path must be guided by a constant awareness of the interplay between the components and their integrating structure—and between their practical and theoretical purposes, as well. Perhaps attempts at interpretation must recognize that, within the perspective of Abhidharma, the theoretical enterprise is itself an integral part of practice.

Many prior studies of early Buddhist religious praxis have noted this interplay, expressing it in terms of a tension or even a fundamental dichotomy implicit in the textual descriptions of the path—that is, a tension or dichotomy between the acquisition of requisite knowledge and the meditative experience or cultivation of affective qualities. This tension has been described as (1) that between the rational and the mystical;[1] (2) that between methods of knowledge (jñāna) and of trance (dhyāna), which might be equated with discerning *(vipaśyanā)* and calming *(śamatha)*, respectively;[2] (3) that between insight meditation and concentrative meditation;[3] and (4) that between conflicting theories of praxis and liberation represented by a "negative-intellectual" current of philosophical theory and by a "positive-mystical" current of spiritual practice.[4] These treatments presume that the tension between knowledge and meditative concentration evident in certain textual descriptions of the path reflects an actual divergence in techniques and historical traditions of religious praxis. They also imply that either perfected

knowledge or perfected concentration, whether alone or combined, constitute the final goal. This begs the question of whether the apparent divergence in praxis is a sign of different ultimate objectives that are historically distinct in origin, or whether knowledge and meditative concentration were intended to function together to elicit a single goal.

An examination of the path-structure in Abhidharma texts suggests an alternative explanation, neglected in previous studies, to this tension between the cognitive and meditative—namely, a final goal that subsumes knowledge and concentration as equally cooperative means rather than mutually exclusive ends.[5] This inclusive goal is the abandonment of specific defilements *(kleśaprahāṇa)* and the ultimate destruction of all fluxes *(āsravakṣaya);* extensive textual evidence both from early canonical texts and from Abhidharma materials argues that this—not concentration or knowledge alone—represents the final goal in many segments of the Buddhist tradition.[6] It would be instructive to examine the interplay among the components of the path and the apparent tension between cognitive and meditative techniques in this new light. If, then, the ultimate objective is recognized to be the abandonment of defilements, how do knowledge and concentration function in eradicating them?

This new perspective provides the first and essential key to resolving the numerous structural and historical issues encumbering a comprehensive interpretation of the path, for even a sampling of the available textual evidence suggests that abandoning defilements is indeed the goal of Abhidharma religious praxis and the organizing principle of its construction of the path. While acknowledging the tension between knowledge and concentration as recognized in previous studies,[7] I will demonstrate that Abhidharma texts attempt to harmonize these two tendencies, or at least incorporate them both on the path toward a different ultimate objective—that is, the abandonment of defilements. As will become clear, later Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts do not present either the practice of concentration or the acquisition of knowledge as the ultimate religious goal, but rather as means for abandoning and preventing the future arising of defilements.

## The Goal of the Abhidharma Path

The northern Indian Abhidharma interpretations of modes of praxis, the religious goal, and the interrelation between praxis and goal naturally depend on antecedents transmitted through earlier Buddhist texts and traditions of practice. Unfortunately, there is little agreement in the scholarly interpretation of these early Buddhist sources. Given the difficulty of dating strata within the earliest texts and the divergent viewpoints that these texts represent, such lack of agreement is inevitable,

but it also results, in part, from a tacit acceptance of differences in interpretative emphasis proposed by later Buddhist transmitters and compilers. This tacit acceptance, in turn, often reflects implicit scholarly biases—in this case, a predilection for interpretations that emphasize either knowledge or concentration.

Among the canonical materials that provide evidence for the putative goals of early Buddhist praxis are (1) scattered references to the methods and objectives of religious praxis, and (2) accounts of the enlightenment experiences of the Buddha and his disciples, including both biographical references and descriptions of the content of this realization as presented in the *Dharmacakrapravartanasūtra.*[8] There are multiple accounts of the enlightenment experience and evidence of historical accretions,[9] but abandoning defilements, attaining the destruction of the fluxes *(āsravakṣaya),* and knowing that this destruction has been accomplished play a central role in all accounts. For example, both in the biographical accounts of the Buddha's enlightenment and in separate discussions of the three clear intuitions *(vidyā),* which are accepted as the content of that enlightenment experience, the last intuition or culminating realization is that of the destruction of the fluxes *(āsravakṣaya)* or the knowledge of the destruction of the fluxes *(āsravakṣayajñāna).*[10] This particular knowledge is first elaborated as consisting of the sequential knowledge of the four noble truths—knowledge of the fact of suffering, of the origin of suffering, of the cessation of suffering, and of the path leading to this cessation. Next, this fourfold knowledge is applied to the fluxes themselves, yielding knowledge of the fact of the fluxes, of their origin, and so on.

Although there is much scholarly disagreement about whether these references to the destruction of the fluxes belong to the earliest accounts of the enlightenment experience,[11] the canon also positions the destruction of the fluxes as the culmination of a series of practices or cultivations,[12] often through the stereotyped formula, "thought is liberated from the fluxes" *(āsavehi cittaṃ vimuttam).*[13] The destruction of the fluxes is thus presented as the generalized goal of religious praxis and, subsequently, as the quality defining arhatship.[14]

The prominent role accorded the destruction of the fluxes in the elaboration both of religious praxis and of the soteriological goal within early Buddhist texts is continued within northern Indian Abhidharma texts.[15] The noble path of religious praxis is defined as that which is contrary to the arising of defilements,[16] and entering completely into the ocean of the Buddha's teaching is said to occur through the realization of complete nirvāṇa as a result of destroying the fluxes.[17] The aspirant progresses along this path by successively abandoning defilements that are associated with an established sequence of cosmic realms and cognitive stages,[18] and by attaining virtuous qualities, powers, paths, or

fruits associated with each realm or stage.[19] Similarly, retrogression *(parihāṇi)* from a given level of religious attainment is possible given the reemergence of defilements specific to that level.[20] The final goal of enlightenment *(bodhi)* is defined as consisting of the two varieties of knowledge of the destruction of the fluxes *(āsravakṣayajñāna)* and knowledge of their absolute future nonarising *(anutpādajñāna)*.[21]

The ultimate state attained by religious praxis, that of arhatship, is also conceived in terms of the destruction of defilements. Abhidharma texts offer pseudo-etymologies for the word "arhat": for example, one by whom all defilements—that is, the enemies *(ari)*—are struck down *(han)* by the sword of insight, or one for whom there is distant separation *(āra)* from all evil, unvirtuous factors *(han)*, that is, from the defilements that obstruct virtuous factors.[22] The fruit of arhatship *(arhattvaphala)* occurs when an aspirant completely abandons, in the present life, all defilements of lust, hatred, and delusion; thereby, the aspirant's thought attains liberation from the three varieties of the fluxes—desire, existence in the three realms, and ignorance.[23] This destruction of defilements that constitutes the unconditioned fruit of arhatship is further specified in Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts as the past, present, and future possession *(prāpti)* of the cessation resulting from consideration *(pratisaṃkhyānirodha)*, which refers to cessation of defilements through consideration.[24] As will be explained, in later Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts, this mechanism of possession is used to explain both the ordinary condition of defilement and the process by which defilements are abandoned.

## The Character of Defilements

The complexity of the terminology and taxonomic categories used by Abhidharma texts in the analysis of defilements defies attempts at summary characterization. This complexity results not only from the retention of virtually all terms and categories used in prior texts, but also from a systematizing elaboration characteristic of Abhidharma analysis. For example, the **Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra*, an early northern Indian Abhidharma text, begins its discussion of defilements *(kleśa)* by listing over 530 individual defilements or categories of unvirtuous factors *(akuśaladharma)*.[25] The *Jñānaprasthāna*, a later Sarvāstivādin text, lists sixteen categories of defilements in numerical order from the least numerous category of three fetters *(saṃyojana)* to the most numerous category of ninety-eight contaminants *(anuśaya)*.[26]

Even though these categories represent different groupings of often identical defiling factors, the various terms for the individual factors and the categories themselves, as used in the sūtra, are not without historical differences in meaning and function. However, after being syste-

matized by Abhidharma compilers, who arranged traditional categories in new schemata, often without respect to their original context, the traditional distinctions among these categories were blurred and can now be recovered only with great difficulty from the Abhidharma accounts. Also, the new interrelations among the various categories of defilements developed within the early Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika texts are ambiguous. For example, a stylized list is used frequently to refer generically to all varieties of defiling factors: fetters *(saṃyojana),* bonds *(bandhana),* contaminants *(anuśaya),* subsidiary defilements *(upakleśa),* and manifestly active defilements *(paryavasthāna).*[27] Although each of these terms undoubtedly had distinct contexts of use within the sūtras, such formulaic lists suggest that the terms were no longer clearly distinguished in Abhidharma texts. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* even states explicitly that any factor included in one of these categories should also be included in the others.[28] Commenting on the sixteen categories of defilements listed in the *Jñānaprasthāna,* the *Mahāvibhāṣā* suggests their interchangeability by identifying each category as a subset of the general category of defilements or *kleśas.* Despite this harmonizing and leveling of the categories of defilements, the *Mahāvibhāṣā,* possibly in deference to inherited traditional usage, also gives independent definitions of the names for each of these categories, often distinguishing the specific activity of a given category within the scope of the activity of defilements in general.[29] However, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* stops short of declaring either that all these terms for and categories of defilements are identical or that they are radically different in character or function.

Within post-*Vibhāṣā* Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts, categories of defilements come to be differentiated according to their functions, which in turn become the subject of heated sectarian controversy. This controversy reflects the further refinement of theories concerning the operation of both thought and defilements, as well as the methods by which defilements are to be abandoned. It is also interconnected with the development of more sophisticated ontological theories, which inevitably affected all aspects of Abhidharma doctrine. In particular, this controversy involves the possibility of a distinction between latent and active defilements, and the relation between these defilements (whether latent or active) and the thought processes of the individual life-stream that they characterize.

At issue is the development of a model that could successfully explain the apparent, persistent activity of certain defilements, the reemergence of their activity after an interruption, and the mechanism by which they are to be abandoned. For example, can unvirtuous defilements arise conditioned by a morally dissimilar virtuous factor? If not, then what is the causal mechanism by which defilements arise immediately after a virtuous moment of thought? Further, if defilements are associated with

thought, since two associated thought-concomitants of differing moral quality cannot occur simultaneously, how can the virtuous counteragent that obstructs a particular defilement arise simultaneously with it? If, however, defilements are not understood to be associated with thought, their very activity of defiling thought is meaningless, and no abandonment is necessary. Finally, if defilements are understood to exist as real entities in the past and future as well as in the present, then they can never be destroyed in the sense that they become nonexistent, so in what sense can they be said to be abandoned?

One important focus for this controversy is the interpretation of the term "contaminant" *(anuśaya),* which is the primary word used for defilement in Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts.[30] The varying interpretations of this term depend on the possibility of a distinction between contaminants and another variety of defilements, the "manifestly active defilements" *(paryavasthāna).* The *Mahāvibhāṣā* records the views of certain northern Indian Abhidharma schools that define *anuśaya* as a latent phase of defilements, as distinguished from their overtly functioning phase, which is designated by *paryavasthāna.* The Vibhajyavādins, for example, in rejecting the possibility of retrogression for an arhat, claim:

> Contaminants are the seeds of manifestly active defilements. Contaminants are, by nature, not associated with thought; manifestly active defilements are, by nature, associated with thought. Manifestly active defilements are produced from contaminants. [Even if it were said that] one retrogresses from arhatship due to the present operation *(saṃmukhībhāva)* of manifestly active defilements, since manifestly active defilements would not arise when the contaminants have been abandoned, how could one be said to have retrogression?[31]

Here the Vibhajyavādins propose that contaminants are defilements in a latent phase and are, in that phase, dissociated from thought. These latent dissociated defilements are the seeds that give rise to a manifestly active phase, which, like all thought contaminants, is associated with thought. This distinction between a latent and active phase of defilements, represented by the terms "contaminants" and "manifestly active defilements," respectively, is further intimated by Upaśānta's *Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra.* This text offers a pseudo-etymology to support the interpretation of *anuśaya* as meaning "subtle," that is, as operating only subtly *(sūkṣmapracāratvāt)* in contrast to manifestly active defilements *(paryavasthāna),* which are gross or overt in their operation.[32] Finally, Ghoṣaka's **Abhidharmāmṛtaśāstra* also implicitly supports this distinction between a latent and an active phase of defilements by dividing a maximum possible total of 108 defilements *(kleśa)* into two groups, including both contaminants (98) and manifestly active defilements (10).[33] Although later Kāśmīra Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika texts ada-

mantly deny any such distinction between contaminants and manifestly active defilements, at several points in the course of arguments on other topics, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* records such a distinction based on the latency or manifestation of a defilement's activity. For example:

> Further, it is said that only when the defilements *(kleśa)* are in present operation are they called fetters belonging to the lower realm *(avarabhāgīyasaṃyojana);* [but] the Buddha has said that whether [they are] in the state of being manifestly active defilements or contaminants, they are still called fetters belonging to the lower realm.[34]

Another important focus for these controversies about the function of defilements concerns their association with or dissociation from thought.[35] The *Mahāvibhāṣā* records three pseudo-etymologies for the term "contaminant" *(anuśaya),* two of which—*aṇu* (subtle) and *anuśerate* (adhering closely, or, in later Sarvāstivādin texts, growing)[36]—are interpreted as reflecting its intrinsic association with thought. The third pseudo-etymology, which derives *anuśaya* from *anubadhnanti* (binding), is understood to refer to those contaminants that are dissociated from thought. For the Sarvāstivādins all contaminants are understood to be associated with thought, so this third sense of contaminants as binding and dissociated must refer, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* argues, not to the contaminant itself but to a separate factor intimately connected to its functioning: namely, possession *(prāpti),* which serves to connect a given contaminant to a particular life-stream. As a force dissociated from thought *(cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra),* this possession can therefore justifiably be referred to as dissociated.[37]

This issue of association with or dissociation from thought is raised explicitly in Dharmaśrī and Upaśānta's *Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstras* and the *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra.* These texts, in accord with the position that was to become standard for the Kāśmīra Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, give four explicit reasons for the necessary association of contaminants with thought. Contaminants must be associated with thought in order to perform their three activities: (1) that of defiling thought; (2) that of obstructing the arising of virtuous factors; and (3) that of opposing good factors already arisen. As a fourth reason, if contaminants were dissociated from thought, virtuous factors would never arise because these contaminants, being unrestricted by any association with thought, could always be in operation, thereby forever obstructing the arising of virtuous factors.[38] For the Kāśmīra Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, who accepted no distinction between latent and active defilements, contaminants or manifestly active defilements must then be associated with thought. However, certain opponents resorted to a distinction between contaminants and manifestly active defilements, attributing these activities not to contaminants per se but to their active phase as mani-

festly active defilements. As a result, whereas the manifestly active defilements that perform these activities must be associated with thought, the latent defilements may be dissociated from it.

Later Abhidharma texts, such as Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Saṅghabhadra's *Nyāyānusāra*, and the *Abhidharmadīpa*, pursue these two points of controversy in their debates over the interpretation of the compound *kāmarāga-anuśaya*, the name of the first of the seven recognized varieties of contaminants.[39] One group, in an attempt to support the identity of manifestly active defilements and contaminants, interpreted the compound as a descriptive determinative *(karmadhāraya)*, stating that it refers to "the contaminant *(anuśaya)*, that is, [the manifestly active defilement called] lust for desires *(kāmarāga)*." This group included the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, who rejected any latent form of defilements. A second group, in an attempt to support the position that manifestly active defilements are distinct from contaminants, interpreted the compound as a genitive dependent determinative *(tatpuruṣa)* referring to "the contaminant *(anuśaya)* of [the manifestly active defilement called] lust for sense pleasures *(kāmarāga)*." To this group belonged the Vibhajyavādins, Mahāsāṅghikas,[40] and Vātsīputrīyas, all of whom claimed that the term "contaminants" can be used in both a broad and a narrow sense: broadly to include manifestly active defilements, or more narrowly to refer only to the cause of manifestly active defilements—that is, latent contaminants.[41] The Sautrāntikas and Vasubandhu also interpreted the compound like this second group, and thus accepted some distinction between latent contaminants and manifestly active defilements. They claimed, however, that latent contaminants do not exist as independent, real entities.

The divergent positions of these groups concerning the relation between contaminants and manifestly active defilements paralleled their views on the issue of a contaminant's association with or dissociation from thought. All groups agreed that manifestly active defilements are factors (dharmas) associated with thought *(cittasaṃprayukta)*: that is, a given active defilement and a given moment of thought share the same basis *(āśraya)*, object-support *(ālambana)*, features *(ākāra)*, time *(kāla)*, and existential occurrence in a single moment *(dravya)*.[42] However, a contaminant's association with or dissociation from thought depends on the identification of or distinction between contaminants and manifestly active defilements. For the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, who maintained the identity of contaminants and manifestly active defilements, a contaminant is always associated with a given moment of thought. However, the Vibhajyavādins, Mahāsāṅghikas, and Vātsīputrīyas, who distinguished contaminants from manifestly active defilements, maintained that contaminants are dissociated from thought.[43] Vasubandhu, following the position of the Sautrāntikas, adopted an intermediate

position, claiming that because a contaminant is not a distinct, real entity *(adravyāntaratvāt),* it cannot be said to be either associated with or dissociated from thought.[44] Rather, a contaminant is simply a latent defilement *(prasuptakleśa)*—that is, a seed-state *(bījabhāva)* not in present operation *(asaṃmukhībhūta).* When that seed is awakened *(prabuddha),* the defilement comes to present operation and becomes manifest as an active defilement. This seed-state itself arises from another, previous defilement and contains the power to produce a subsequent defilement, thereby forming a series *(bījabhāvānubandha)* that belongs to the material basis *(ātmabhāva, āśraya)* of a sentient being.

The problem of interpreting *anuśaya* may appear to be simply one of terminology. Indeed, all parties would agree that active defilements, regardless of what they are called, must be associated with thought if they are to be effective in defiling thought. Substantive and unavoidable difficulties ensue, however, in trying to explain the arising of an active defilement in the midst of a series of dissimilar virtuous moments of thought, or in trying to account for the process by which a defilement is abandoned. Here terminological distinctions reflect attempts to devise additional explanatory mechanisms to resolve these difficulties. The Vibhajyavādins' mechanism is a distinct contaminant *(anuśaya)* that is both distinguished from active defilements as their cause and dissociated from thought.[45] Because it is dissociated, it can condition the arising of active defilements regardless of the moral character of the preceding moment of thought.[46] Similarly, for Vasubandhu and the Sautrāntikas, this mechanism is the active defilement in its latent form as a contaminant or seed *(bīja)* that can either remain dormant or emerge under proper conditions as a functioning active defilement.

The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas attempted to resolve these difficulties with a dual mechanism. First, since defilements, like all factors, are claimed to exist and can function as conditions in the past, present, and future, a past defilement, though not presently active as such, can function as the condition for the arising of a different presently active defilement, regardless of the moral character of the preceding moment of thought. The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas thus obviate the need to assume the existence of a separate latent contaminant or seed from which presently active defilements emerge. Second, they account both for the connection between a given defilement and a life-stream during moments of varying moral quality and for the abandonment of defilements by positing a new mechanism: possession *(prāpti).* Possession acts to connect a given defilement to a given life-stream, whether or not that defilement is actively functioning—that is, whether that defilement is present, past, or future. A defilement can be abandoned by severing this possession and thus terminating the connection between the defilement and the life-stream.

These models of a contaminant (1) as distinct from manifestly active defilements, (2) as a seed, and (3) as possession were all motivated by a need to resolve the same causal problems. These models also indicate that later Abhidharma texts were more specific in their analysis of the character and operation of defilements. Like the early texts, post-*Vibhāṣā* Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts use stylized lists of synonyms for defilements, but with an important difference in motivation: the synonymous use of all these terms for defilements now follows naturally from the Sarvāstivādin position that contaminants and manifestly active defilements are identical.[47] The taxonomic classification of defilements also reached an apex in the Sarvāstivādin schema of ninety-eight contaminants, which is not attested in the sūtra. Rather than reflecting any intrinsic difference among the contaminants themselves, this elaborate schema was assembled in accordance with the edifice of cosmic realms and cognitive stages, and mirrors the gradual process through which contaminants are to be abandoned. This schema of ninety-eight contaminants was generated from a basic set of seven contaminants mentioned in the sūtra and prominent among the lists of categories of defilements in Abhidharma texts: lust for sense pleasures *(kāmarāga),* hostility *(pratigha),* lust for existence *(bhavarāga),* pride *(māna),* ignorance *(avidyā),* views *(dṛṣṭi),* and doubt *(vicikitsā).*[48] By combining the two varieties of lust and dividing views into five varieties, ten contaminants result.[49] When these ten varieties are correlated with the three cosmic realms—the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the formless realm —and each contaminant in each realm is specified according to whether it is to be abandoned by the path of vision or by the path of cultivation, the schema of ninety-eight contaminants is produced.[50]

## The Structure of the Path

Concomitant with the elaboration of this schema of defilements is a parallel elaboration of stages of religious praxis. The intricate path-structure characteristic of the later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas is not explicitly developed in early Abhidharma texts. Instead, evidence suggests that in these early texts, diverse traditional components of practice were incorporated from the sūtra and elaborated in accordance with newly emerging distinctions, which together gradually produced the structure that came to characterize the new Abhidharma path.[51] The absence of a single organizing principle and internally consistent path-structure in the earliest Abhidharma discussions may indicate that a distinctive Abhidharma path had not yet developed, or it may reflect a lack of concern with an overarching and coherent doctrinal structure. But this absence may also be, at least in part, a function of the implicit purposes underlying early Abhidharma exegesis. The authors of the earliest Abhidharma

texts may have been motivated not to construct a coherent edifice of theoretical doctrinal interpretation, but rather to specify the character of the component factors of sentient experience by clarifying the distinctions among them in accordance with emerging categories of classification. By thus classifying all the components of sentient experience, those that are to be cultivated are differentiated from those that are to be abandoned, and the direction of proper praxis becomes evident. This classification is carried out by examining each factor in terms of formulaic questions and answers based on categories *(mātṛkā)*: for example, the categorization of factors in terms of their character as conditioned and unconditioned; in terms of their moral quality as virtuous, unvirtuous, and indeterminate; and so on. Thus, in the early texts, abstract doctrinal positions are not explicitly stated but must be inferred from the categories used, the specific questions raised, and the answers given.

The path of praxis as developed in later Sarvāstivādin texts is characterized by a bipartite structure including a path of vision *(darśanamārga)* and a path of cultivation *(bhāvanāmārga)*. Precedents for this distinction between vision and cultivation appear in the earliest northern Abhidharma texts in a threefold categorization *(mātṛkā)* of all factors in terms of their method of abandonment: certain factors are to be abandoned by vision *(darśanaheya, darśanaprahātavya)*, others by cultivation *(bhāvanāheya, bhāvanāprahātavya)*, and still others are not to be abandoned *(aheya, aprahātavya)*.[52]

Further, in early Sarvāstivādin texts, the elaboration of the schema of ninety-eight varieties of contaminants and the descriptions of specific types of practice presume the existence of this bipartite structure.[53] For example, the *Vijñānakāya* classifies varieties of perceptual consciousness *(vijñāna)* and thought *(citta)* in terms of their relation to contaminants *(anuśaya)*; it exhaustively enumerates those types of perceptual consciousness that support the growth of certain contaminants, and it specifies which of those contaminants are to be abandoned by vision *(darśana)* and which by cultivation *(bhāvanā)*.[54] In this discussion, vision takes the four noble truths as its object, and this fourfold vision yields four distinct varieties of knowledge. The *Vijñānakāya* makes further reference to

> unvirtuous thoughts that belong to one who is not yet separated from lust in the realm of desire, but who has already given rise to the knowledge of suffering, and not yet to the knowledge of the origin of suffering. [Such unvirtuous thoughts] are to be abandoned through vision of the origin of suffering, of cessation, or of the path, or [they are to be abandoned] through cultivation.[55]

In this passage, both vision and its resultant knowledge as well as cultivation are designated as methods by which contaminants are to be

abandoned, and this abandonment occurs by progressing through successive stages of the vision of the four noble truths to the practice of cultivation.

Another important component of the later Sarvāstivādin path-structure, which also has precedents in earlier texts, is that of two stages of knowledge: namely, knowledge of the doctrine *(dharmajñāna)*[56] and subsequent knowledge *(anvayajñāna)*.[57] These two are applied to each of the four noble truths, yielding eight varieties: the knowledge of doctrine with regard to suffering, the subsequent knowledge of suffering, and so on.[58] The *Saṅgītiparyāya* further subdivides each of these eight into two varieties, the presentiment of the knowledge *(jñānakṣānti)*[59] and the knowledge proper *(jñāna)*, yielding sixteen stages.[60] In this passage from the *Saṅgītiparyāya,* the description of praxis begins with the stage of the supreme mundane factors *(laukikāgradharma)*, from which one progresses to the presentiment of the knowledge of the doctrine with regard to suffering *(duḥkhe dharmajñānakṣānti)*. The remaining fifteen stages follow, culminating in the subsequent knowledge of the path *(mārge 'nvayajñāna)*.

Significantly, in contrast to the passage from the *Vijñānakāya* just cited,[61] the *Saṅgītiparyāya* does not append any reference to cultivation *(bhāvanā)* as necessary after the acquisition of these sixteen stages of presentiment and knowledge. It simply juxtaposes its discussion of these stages with a discussion of the two paths through which one attains the four fruits of religious praxis: the mundane path *(laukikamārga)*, through which one can attain only the fruits of the once-returner or the nonreturner; and the path not tending toward the fluxes *(anāsravamārga)*, through which one can attain any of the four fruits. This passage from the *Saṅgītiparyāya* may thus represent an early stage in the development of the Sarvāstivādin path-structure, in which the path of vision and the path of cultivation had not yet been combined sequentially in the manner of later texts.

The outline of the later Sarvāstivādin path-structure appears fully developed in the *Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra*.[62] As presented there, this structure begins with four stages of penetration *(nirvedhabhāgīya)*, which are also identified with one form of the four virtuous roots *(kuśalamūla)*:[63] heat *(ūṣmagata)*, summit *(mūrdhan)*, presentiment *(kṣānti)*, and highest mundane factors *(laukikāgradharma)*. These four stages are traversed prior to the acquisition of the first moment of thought not tending toward the fluxes *(anāsravacitta)*, which constitutes the first moment of the path of vision. In this path of vision, one progresses through successive stages of presentiment and knowledge applied to each of the two stages of knowledge and subsequent knowledge of the four noble truths, until, in sixteen moments, correct vision is attained. In this sixteenth moment, various stages and noble fruits of religious praxis can be

attained, depending on the categories of defilements that have been, or still need to be, abandoned through the practice of cultivation. Each of the nine stages of the cosmic realms (i.e., the realm of desire, four trance states in the realm of form, and four spheres in the formless realm) possesses nine varieties of defilements (weak-weak, weak-middle, weak-strong, and so on). After abandoning the eighth variety of defilements belonging to the ninth stage, one enters the equipoise of cessation *(nirodhasamāpatti),* in which one experiences with one's body *(kāyasākṣin)* the cessation of defilements.[64] Finally, within the ninth and final variety of the ninth stage—that is, the sphere of neither conception nor nonconception *(naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana)*—one enters the adamantine concentration *(vajropamasamādhi)* and the final remaining variety of defilements is eliminated. The knowledge of the destruction of the fluxes *(āsravakṣaya)* arises together with the recognition that the process of abandonment is complete; one is then an arhat.

This basic path-structure, as presented in the *Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra,* is further elaborated in later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika texts, which interweave categories of virtuous qualities, meditative states, supernormal powers, or liberations, formerly distinct within the sūtra, into the stages of the new path-structure. Throughout, the organizing principle underlying this structure and directing the incorporation of these practices continues to be that of defilement and purification. Praxis consists of a gradual process through which one is sequentially disconnected from specific defilements through the application of vision and cultivation, culminating in the complete abandonment and future nonarising of all such defilements. The result of this interweaving is a massive edifice of progressive stages, each associated with specific defilements and qualities, all of which are directed toward the final goal of freedom from all defilements.

## The Abandonment of Defilements

### *The Range, Mode of Operation, and Arising of Defilements*

The conception of defilements found in the Abhidharma—specifically, the conception of their range, their mode of operation, and the conditions required for their arising—dictates the concrete methods proposed for their abandonment. As the *Prakaraṇapāda* makes clear, defilements operate within the limits of thought and thought-concomitants, and do not operate on material form *(rūpa),* unconditioned factors *(asaṃskṛtadharma),* or forces dissociated from thought *(cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra).*[65] Therefore, a defilement can be abandoned only through the manipulation or transformation of thought processes, not through any exclusively physical means. Defilements provide the basis for action *(karman),* and

thus ultimately contribute to the continuation of rebirth.[66] The close connection between defilements and actions is further suggested by the *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra,* which specifies the operation of defilements in terms of ten functions, the majority of which detail how defilements act as causes generating and supporting action, thereby reinforcing entrapment in those conditions that result in future rebirth.[67] Conversely, one can of course alter the effect and future generation of defilements by manipulating action *(karman).*

The conditions for the arising of defilements also determine their methods of abandonment. The *Mahāvibhāṣā,* quoting the *Prakaraṇapāda,* gives three such requisite conditions, which are also cited and elaborated in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and *Nyāyānusāra.*[68] The first condition obtains when a contaminant *(anuśaya)* that is not yet abandoned *(aprahīṇa)* and not yet completely understood *(aparijñāta)* serves as the cause *(hetubala)* for the arising of another contaminant. As Saṅghabhadra explains, there are three reasons why a contaminant may be neither abandoned nor thoroughly known: (1) its possession is not yet cut off *(tatprāptyanucchedāt);* (2) its counteragent has not yet arisen *(tatpratipakṣasya cā 'nutpatteḥ);*[69] and (3) its object is not yet thoroughly known.

The second condition for the arising of defilements obtains when factors that are presently appearing *(ābhāsagata),* and that are conducive to the manifestation *(paryavasthānīya)* of a given contaminant, serve as the object-field *(viṣayabala)* for the arising of that contaminant.[70] In explaining this, Saṅghabhadra argues vehemently against the Dārṣṭāntika position that the object-field of defilements is not established as real, but rather is simply a product of discriminative thought *(vikalpa).*[71] For Saṅghabhadra, all object-fields are real entities by their very nature as object-fields; further, the particular character of an object-field, as conducive to lust, hostility, and so on, is intrinsic to it and not merely a product of discriminative thought. Therefore, in Saṅghabhadra's view, religious praxis actually severs one's connection to actually existing defilements and does not simply alter an erroneous or deleterious process of discriminative thought.

The third condition for the arising of defilements obtains when incorrect attention *(ayoniśomanaskāra)* with regard to the object-field of a contaminant serves as the impetus *(prayogabala)* for the arising of that contaminant. Saṅghabhadra identifies this incorrect attention as erroneous *(viparīta)* orientation *(ābhoga),* and compares the action of incorrect attention to an object-field to that of boring a piece of wood: when this orientation of incorrect attention occurs, the fires of lust are produced.[72]

Through its insistence on the cooperation of three requisite conditions for the arising of defilements, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* rejects the contentions put forth by non-Buddhists that defilements arise only due to an object-field, and thus no longer arise if the object-field is destroyed.[73]

Instead, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* claims that a particular manifestly active defilement *(paryavasthāna)* arises not simply as a result of an appropriate object-field, but also because contaminants *(anuśaya)* of the same type have not yet been abandoned, or because of incorrect attention. Accordingly, it holds that the destruction of the object-fields of defilements cannot be the sole condition for their abandonment. Although the object-field plays an important role in the process of abandonment, the removal of the object-field alone is not sufficient to guarantee that a defilement no longer arises.

*The Meaning of Abandonment*

What then does the abandonment of defilements entail, and what are its specific causes? As in the case of the character of defilements, the meaning of abandonment and the processes through which it is effected depend on the ontology and model of psychological functioning adopted by particular schools. For the Sarvāstivādins, who supported a realistic ontology in which factors exist in their intrinsic nature in all three time periods, abandonment cannot be equated with destruction, for a defilement, like any real entity, cannot be destroyed.[74] Instead, abandonment must entail some type of separation from or deactivation of a defilement, which, though continuing to exist, no longer contaminates a given moment of thought. However, due to the Sarvāstivādin position that there is no distinction between a latent and an active phase of defilements, deactivation cannot consist either of the suppression of active defilements or of the extirpation of latent ones. Further, given the Sarvāstivādin position that all defilements are associated with thought, and that this quality is an intrinsic characteristic that cannot be altered, an associated defilement cannot be abandoned in the sense that it becomes dissociated from thought, thereby changing its intrinsic character. Finally, for the Sarvāstivādins thought does not exist as an unchanging substratum that undergoes, by turns, association with or dissociation from specific defilements.[75] Rather, if a given moment of thought is associated with a defilement, that moment of thought will always be thus associated, even when it has passed away. Therefore, separation or deactivation cannot consist of dissociation from a previously associated defilement.

Thus the Sarvāstivādin ontology and theory of psychological functioning precludes any interpretation of abandonment as destruction or dissociation. Indeed, their interpretation of abandonment is revealed only by analyzing the fundamental mechanism through which thought is understood to be defiled. First, a contaminant does not become active in defiling a given moment of thought merely through association with it; rather, that contaminant must "adhere or grow" *(anuśerate)* within that moment of thought.[76] Accordingly, abandonment does not occur

through mere dissociation, but through terminating a contaminant's adhering or growing, for even if abandoned (and hence no longer adhering or growing), a contaminant is still considered to be associated with thought.[77] Contaminants adhere or grow in two ways: either with regard to the object-support *(ālambanataḥ)* of a given moment of thought, or with regard to the factors with which that moment of thought is associated *(saṃprayuktataḥ)*.[78] This adherence or growth is threefold: a contaminant projects the arising of the present possession of contaminants, obstructs the life-stream, and acts as the homogeneous cause *(sabhāgahetu)* in projecting the uniform outflow *(niṣyanda)* of similar moments of thought within that life-stream.[79] Abandonment of an associated contaminant does not mean that it becomes dissociated from thought, but rather that these three operations cease through the power of a counteragent that arises within the life-stream.

For the Sarvāstivādins, even past and future contaminants are considered defiling in the sense that they adhere or grow. Otherwise, since only one thought *(citta)* and its associated thought-concomitants *(caitta)* arise in each moment, and morally dissimilar thought-concomitants cannot occur simultaneously, when an undefiled moment of thought is in present operation, a person would be said to be without contaminants, making the further practice of the path unnecessary.[80] However, this adherence or growth of past or future contaminants must somehow be distinguished from their present activity *(kāritra)*. Some Abhidharma masters suggested that past contaminants act to condition the arising of the present possession of contaminants, just as an extinguished fire is able to give rise to smoke. The Abhidharma master Ghoṣaka proposed that, even though a past contaminant does not exert the present activity *(kāritra)* of grasping an object-field, it still has the capability *(sāmarthya)*, like a present contaminant, of binding one to an object-support or to other associated factors. Finally, another master, Kṣemadatta, offered a fivefold explanation of this adherence or growth of past and future contaminants: (1) the cause of the contaminants is not yet destroyed; (2) their possession is not yet abandoned; (3) their material basis *(āśraya)* is not yet transmuted *(*parāvṛtta)*; (4) one has not yet known their object-support; and (5) one has not yet obtained their counteragent *(pratipakṣa)*. Therefore, for the Sarvāstivādins, religious praxis consists of the abandonment of defilements, not only present, but also past and future.

*Methods of Abandonment*

The central role accorded to the object-support in the arising and operation of defilements is apparent also in the specific methods recommended for their abandonment. In the *Jñānaprasthāna*, contaminants are said to be abandoned "in dependence upon the object-support."[81] However, there are several interpretations of this phrase. The *Mahāvi-*

*bhāṣā* generally interprets this dependence as indicating that defilements can be said to be abandoned if, due to the activity of a counteragent, they no longer give rise to error with regard to an object-field. Others propose that a contaminant is abandoned only when one sees its object-support with insight.[82] Still others propose that in certain cases contaminants are abandoned through the abandonment of their object-support, or through the abandonment of other contaminants for which the original contaminants are the object-support.[83] Finally, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* quotes the views of yet other masters who, in addition to these methods employing the object-support, admit the possession of a counteragent alone, without the object-support, as a method for the abandonment of certain contaminants.[84]

These various interpretations are then subsumed within four distinct methods for the abandonment of contaminants listed in Upaśānta's *Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* and the *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra,*[85] and later adopted by Vasubandhu and Saṅghabhadra. These include abandonment of certain contaminants through: (1) the complete understanding of the object-support *(ālambanaparijñāna);* (2) the destruction of those contaminants that take the contaminant to be abandoned as their object-support *(tadālambanasaṃkṣaya);* (3) the abandonment of the object-support *(ālambanaprahāṇa);* and (4) the arising of the counteragent *(pratipakṣodaya).*[86] Each of these methods has as its scope the contaminants of distinct cosmic realms that are to be abandoned through specific stages of the path of vision or of the path of cultivation.[87] The first three methods expand the terse assertion made in the *Jñānaprasthāna* that contaminants are to be abandoned "in dependence upon the object-support." These methods are to be applied to contaminants that are to be abandoned by the path of vision *(darśanamārga),*[88] whereas abandonment through the arising of a counteragent is to be applied to those contaminants that are to be abandoned by the path of cultivation *(bhāvanāmārga).*[89] Cultivation is also divided into four types: the first two —the cultivation of acquisition *(pratilambha)* and the cultivation of habitual practice *(niṣevaṇa)*—are directed toward developing virtuous conditioned factors, while the last two—the cultivation of the counteragent *(pratipakṣa)* and the cultivation of escaping *(vinirdhāvana)*—are applied to all factors tending toward the fluxes, and hence refer specifically to the cultivation of methods for abandoning defilements.[90]

Therefore, from the terse directive of the *Jñānaprasthāna* that contaminants are to be abandoned "in dependence upon the object-support," numerous methods were developed that are applicable to all possible contaminants. First, contaminants are distinguished according to whether or not their object-support is involved in their abandonment. If the object-support is involved, contaminants are to be abandoned by the path of vision; distinctions are then drawn among them in accord-

ance with (1) whether or not their object-support tends toward the fluxes, (2) the cosmic realm to which their object-support belongs, and (3) the noble truth with which their object-support is associated. If the object-support is not involved, contaminants are to be abandoned through cultivation alone; they are distinguished simply by their intensity and by the cosmic realm to which they belong. Thus later Sarvāstivādin texts enumerate contaminants in a complex matrix in accordance with qualifications concerning the role of their object-support, the cosmic realm to which they belong, and the consequent path through which their abandonment occurs.

*The Paths of Vision and Cultivation*

The differences among these four methods of abandonment and their correlation in the later Sarvāstivādin path-structure with the paths of vision or cultivation suggest that there are substantive differences between these two paths with regard to practice and expected goal. Furthermore, later texts, such as the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* contain lists of various types of paths (mārga) that imply different modes of practice and that argue for a complex history leading to the Abhidharma systematization.[91] However, regardless of any historical differences in the contexts of use for these various paths, according to later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika analysis, the paths of vision and cultivation do not correspond to radically different modes of practice or goals. Despite their names, the operations of vision, knowledge, and insight are not exclusively reserved for the path of vision, nor are trance, meditation, and repeated practice exclusively reserved for the path of cultivation.

How then are the paths of vision and cultivation to be distinguished from each other? The *Mahāvibhāṣā* itself raises this question:

> Question: Why [do we use the] terms "to be abandoned by the path of vision" *(darśanaprahātavya),* and "to be abandoned by the path of cultivation" *(bhāvanāprahātavya)?* Since vision is not separated from cultivation and cultivation is not separated from vision, how are these two [different] names for abandonment established?
>
> Answer: Though true cultivation can be attained even in the path of vision and true vision can be attained even in the path of cultivation, [since] vision [here refers to] insight *(prajñā)* and cultivation [here refers to] vigilance *(apramāda),* . . . [and since] in the path of vision insight is great and vigilance is slight, and in the path of cultivation vigilance is great and insight is slight, therefore the terms for these [methods] of abandonment are distinguished [from each other].[92]

The *Mahāvibhāṣā* continues by presenting more than thirty different theories concerning the distinction between abandonment by vision and by cultivation. In this range of theories, the following general points are emphasized: comprehensive observation *(abhisamaya)* of the four noble truths, knowledge (jñāna), and concentration (samādhi) characterize both paths; one progresses gradually through each stage of the path of vision only once, whereas one practices each stage of the path of cultivation repeatedly; ordinary persons *(pṛthagjana)* may practice only the path of cultivation, while noble persons (ārya) may practice both the path of vision and the path of cultivation; the four noble fruits are attained only on the path of cultivation; no retrogression occurs in the case of defilements abandoned through the path of vision, but retrogression is possible in the case of defilements abandoned through the path of cultivation; and the path of vision includes stages of both presentiment and knowledge, whereas the path of cultivation includes stages of knowledge alone.[93] Elsewhere, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* distinguishes the two paths by the cosmic realm and intensity of the defilements to be abandoned by each.[94] Thus the paths of vision and cultivation are demarcated not on the basis of mutually exclusive methods of abandonment but by various criteria, including the character of the defilements to be abandoned, the aspirants employing the path, and the frequency of praxis each path requires.

*The Interdependence of Knowledge and Concentration*

Hence the mere existence of the two paths of vision and cultivation does not justify the presumption of a strict dichotomy between knowledge and concentration inherent to the Sarvāstivādin path-structure. Instead, references in Abhidharma texts of all periods suggest that the application of vision (or knowledge) and the practice of cultivation (or concentration) are closely intertwined in all varieties of religious praxis, and specifically in the process by which defilements are to be abandoned on any path. This interconnection is demonstrated in the traditional list of the four cultivations of concentration *(samādhibhāvanā)*: the fourth cultivation, which occurs in the fourth trance state (dhyāna) within the realm of form, is directed toward the destruction of the fluxes *(āsravakṣaya),* which results from the comprehensive observation of the four noble truths as applied to each of the five aggregates.[95] This interconnection between knowledge and concentration is further demonstrated in the *Saṅgītiparyāya,* which distinguishes between two powers: the power of consideration *(pratisaṃkhyānabala),* which considers the dependence of future effects, specifically rebirth states, on present action; and the power of cultivation *(bhāvanābala),* which practices the limbs of enlightenment such as the applications of mindfulness and other medi-

tative states.[96] The *Saṅgītiparyāya* affirms that both these powers equally result in "the abandonment of unvirtuous factors and the cultivation of virtuous ones." Similarly, in its discussion of calming *(śamatha)* and discerning *(vipaśyanā)*, the *Saṅgītiparyāya* quotes an *Udānavarga* passage that states:

> There is no concentration without insight; there is no insight without concentration. Only when there is both concentration and insight does one attain nirvāṇa.[97]

In its interpretation of this passage, the *Saṅgītiparyāya* again asserts the interdependence of concentration and insight: the particular type of concentration attained is determined by the type of insight developed in it, and since insight takes concentration as its origin and arises from concentration, a given type of insight is produced by an appropriate concentration. Finally, nirvāṇa, defined as the cessation consisting of the destruction of craving, is attained only through both concentration and insight.

The *Mahāvibhāṣā* demonstrates that, for the later Kāśmīra Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas also, knowledge and concentration were inextricably linked in the process by which defilements are abandoned. For example, it states that defilements can be abandoned in the applications of mindfulness *(smṛtyupasthāna)*, but only in mindfulness produced through cultivation *(bhāvanāmaya)*, not in that produced through hearing *(śrutamaya)* or through reflection *(cintāmaya)*.[98] This is because only a path that is characterized by a state of concentration, and that is thus a form of cultivation, is capable of abandoning defilements. Further, in discussing those trance states (dhyāna) in which defilements are abandoned, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* notes that, according to the sūtra, the fluxes are destroyed "in dependence upon" *(āśrita)* a particular trance state, not by the trance state itself.[99] All interpretations offered in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* for this "dependence" emphasize that trance or concentration alone cannot cause the abandonment of defilements; knowledge, discernment, or insight are also necessary.

Although Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma texts present ample evidence for the interdependence of knowledge and concentration in religious praxis, certain passages attest to an ongoing historical and structural tension between them. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* refers several times to disagreements between two masters, Jīvala and Ghoṣavarman, whose divergent opinions on specific doctrinal issues reflect precisely this historical tension between knowledge and concentration.[100] In one such passage, the two masters disagree over whether insight (i.e., knowledge) or the equipoise of cessation (i.e., concentration) is more important for attaining the final religious goal of arhatship.[101] Jīvala claims that insight, because it has an object-support, is superior to the equipoise of cessa-

tion. The implication is that the superior efficacy of insight derives from its ability to undermine defilements associated with its object-support; the equipoise of cessation, being without an object-support, would be ineffective in counteracting such defilements. In contrast, Ghoṣavarman claims that the equipoise of cessation is superior to insight because it is, by definition, attained only by noble ones, whereas ordinary persons can possess certain varieties of insight.

The *Mahāvibhāṣā* also refers to Jīvala and Ghoṣavarman in a discussion of whether or not states of concentration are essential to the abandonment of defilements.[102] Defilements, it states, can be terminated only in dependence on a state of concentration, where "concentration" is explained as the path of the counteragent *(pratipakṣamārga)* and "termination" as complete abandonment *(prahāṇa)*. The views of Jīvala and Ghoṣavarman are then cited on the issue of the particular meditative stages in which defilements can be abandoned, and specifically on whether or not ordinary persons *(pṛthagjana)* can completely abandon defilements by means of the mundane path *(laukikamārga)*.[103] Jīvala contends that only the noble path *(āryamārga)* as cultivated by noble persons is effective in completely abandoning defilements, while Ghoṣavarman maintains that both the noble path and the mundane path practiced by ordinary persons are effective. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* supports Ghoṣavarman and concludes that both noble and ordinary persons, by means of the noble and mundane paths, respectively, are able to abandon defilements completely in the appropriate states of concentration.

The positions of various schools on the capability of ordinary persons and the efficacy of the mundane path in abandoning defilements usually correlate with their views on the relative importance of knowledge and concentration. For the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, ordinary persons can abandon certain defilements by practicing the path of cultivation *(bhāvanāmārga)*, in their case referred to as the mundane path *(laukikamārga)*.[104] Abandoning defilements as an ordinary person on the mundane path obviates the need to abandon them once again as a noble person on the path of vision. Thus the path of cultivation can be practiced either by an ordinary person prior to entering the path of vision, in which case it is referred to as the mundane path, or by a noble one after completing the path of vision.

However, this ability of ordinary persons to abandon defilements was disputed by certain Abhidharma masters. Their view evinces a developing opinion that insight is the primary—if not the sole—determinant for the abandonment of defilements. This insight is understood to be pure, that is, not tending toward the fluxes. It enables one to observe the noble truths comprehensively and occurs only after one becomes a noble one by giving rise to a factor not tending toward the fluxes *(anāsravadharma)*, and thereby enters the path of vision *(darśanamārga)*.

These masters would claim that even though ordinary persons, or even non-Buddhists, may enter the various states of concentration within the Buddhist path-structure, they cannot be said to have abandoned defilements completely because they have not entered the distinctively Buddhist noble path of vision, and therefore have not given rise to the pure insight that is requisite before the defilements can be abandoned.

In the *Mahāvibhāṣā,* this view is attributed to the Dārṣṭāntikas, who argue that defilements cannot be abandoned by the mundane path of an ordinary person.[105] Opponents of the Dārṣṭāntikas cite a sūtra passage referring to Udraka Rāmaputra, who, though not a Buddhist, is said to have entered the sphere of neither conception nor nonconception *(naivasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana)* after having abandoned defilements in the lower regions.[106] The Dārṣṭāntikas reject the applicability of this sūtra passage, claiming that the term "abandonment" is not being used in a strict sense. Applying a distinction between manifestly active defilements *(paryavasthāna)* and latent contaminants *(anuśaya),* they interpret this passage to mean that ordinary persons only temporarily suppress manifestly active defilements, without abandoning the underlying latent contaminants. This temporary suppression of defilements occurs in stages up to but excluding the final sphere of neither conception nor nonconception; at any time, these ordinary persons can fall back to an inferior stage.

This Dārṣṭāntika position appears to echo the position, attributed to the Vibhajyavādins and others, that there is no irreversible abandonment of defilements until the final stage of the adamantine concentration, when comprehensive observation and the complete abandonment of all defilements occur simultaneously.[107] For the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, however, the final goal of the complete destruction of the fluxes is reached through the incremental abandonment of defilements, which results from stages of both concentration and knowledge. Though this final goal of the complete destruction of all defilements may be attained only by a noble one utilizing pure insight after completing the distinctively Buddhist path of vision, ordinary persons and even non-Buddhists can actually abandon individual defilements through cultivation characteristic of the mundane path, and can thereby progress gradually toward the same goal. The Sarvāstivādin insistence on the interconnection of knowledge and concentration at all stages of the path thus shows them to be resistant to the developing opinion that insight is preeminent.

*The Role of Possession in the Abandonment of Defilements*

For the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, the mechanism by which defilements are abandoned cannot be reduced to a meditative attainment or to the emergence of insight. Although the term "abandonment" is recognized

to have been used in a number of senses, including separation, termination, complete understanding, and so on,[108] for the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, it comes to have a special sense intimately connected to their most important ontological assumptions.[109] If, as the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas claim, all factors, including defilements, always exist as distinct, real entities in the three time periods of past, present, and future, then abandonment cannot mean the destruction of a defilement itself. And since for the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas defilements are associated with thought, and hence can never become dissociated, abandonment also cannot mean dissociation from a defilement. Further, once a factor becomes the the object-support for a moment of thought and its associated thought-concomitants, including defilements, this status can never be altered. Therefore, one also cannot abandon past defilements in the sense that one separates those defilements from their object-support. Thus the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas were forced by their ontological premises to develop a new model to explain the process of abandonment.

The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas found the key to this model in the mechanism of possession *(prāpti)* or accompaniment *(samanvāgata),* which acts to connect factors that occur within a given life-stream to that life-stream.[110] As a distinct factor that is dissociated from thought *(cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra),* possession can connect a life-stream to any defilement, which then arises or becomes active due to other causes. Even when the present activity of a defilement and its possession cease and become past, they both continue to be connected to that life-stream through subsequent present possessions that arise conditioned by the original one. These possessions form a stream of effects of uniform outflow *(niṣyandaphala)* that not only connects the life-stream to that past defilement but also causes the arising of the possession of future defilements. Within the life-stream of each person, these streams of possession connecting one to past defilements continue without interruption, regardless of whether or not defilements are presently active.

However, this process of the continued connection with past defilements and the potential for the arising of new defilements can be terminated.[111] The uniform outflow of successive possessions of past and present defilements and the arising of future defilements can be interrupted through the present operation of other possessions—namely, the possessions of counteragents *(pratipakṣa).* According to the four methods of abandonment set forth by later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika texts, the fourth method, via the counteragent, acts to obstruct those defilements to be abandoned by the path of cultivation. However, the term "counteragent" *(pratipakṣa)* is also used in a wider sense, to refer to the obstruction that constitutes the central event in the abandonment of all defilements, whether by the path of vision or the path of cultivation. For

example, the arising of the counteragent for a given past object-support interrupts the causal stream of the possessions of both those defilements that arose dependent on that past object-support and those defilements that arise in dependence on those original defilements. Even though, like all factors, those original defilements and their object-support (as well as the defilements caused by those original defilements) continue to exist in themselves, since the causal stream of their possessions as connected to a particular life-stream has been interrupted, those defilements are said to be abandoned. Further, the arising of yet other defilements is prevented through the present operation of counteragents produced as a result of uniform outflow from the previous counteragents.

A specific type of knowledge, complete understanding *(parijñā),* has an indispensable role in this process of interrupting the stream of possessions. Because a defilement arises, and the stream of possessions of that defilement begins precisely when a given object-field is not completely understood, this stream can be interrupted through the arising of complete understanding with regard to that object-field.[112] Therefore, in the case of those defilements whose method of abandonment is said to be through the object-support, complete understanding is the effective method. This process of abandonment is summarized clearly in the *Mahāvibhāṣā:*

> The noble path does not produce the abandonment of various defilements like a knife cutting a plant, or a stone grinding incense. Rather, when the noble path is present, it causes the possession *(prāpti)* of the accompaniment *(samanvāgata)* of those defilements to cease, and also causes the possession of the nonaccompaniment *(asamanvāgata)* of those defilements to arise. At such a time, it is said that defilements have been abandoned.[113]

In other passages, the phrases "the possession of the accompaniment" and "the possession of the nonaccompaniment" are replaced with "the possession of connection" *(saṃyogaprāpti)* and "the possession of disconnection" *(visaṃyogaprāpti),* respectively.[114] Thus there are two steps in the procedure by which every defilement is abandoned: first, the cessation of "the possession of connection" to a particular defilement, and second, the arising of "the possession of disconnection" from that defilement. The first step serves as the cause for the arising of the second, and their respective activities are compared to throwing out a thief and closing the door, or catching an insect in a jar and plugging the jar's mouth.[115] The second step of disconnection *(visaṃyogaprāpti)* corresponds to the cessation resulting from consideration *(pratisaṃkhyānirodha),* which, for the Sarvāstivādins, is equated with nirvāṇa.[116] One progresses along the path by (1) abandoning the possession of connection to and (2) giving rise to the possession of disconnection from each

separate defilement in turn; thus there are as many disconnections, cessations, or nirvāṇas as there are defilements or categories of defilements to be abandoned.[117]

Each of these two steps is also correlated, through the two paths of vision and cultivation, with specific types of paths, varieties of counteragents, and stages in the later Sarvāstivādin elaboration of the path-structure.[118] The first step, that of abandoning the possession of a given defilement, is referred to as the stage of the immediately successive path *(ānantaryamārga).*[119] The second step, that of the arising of the possession of disconnection *(visaṃyogaprāpti)* from that defilement, is referred to as the path of liberation *(vimuktimārga).* These two paths are also identified, respectively, with the counteragent that results in abandonment *(prahāṇapratipakṣa)* and the counteragent that results in maintenance *(ādhārapratipakṣa).* Both the immediately successive path and the path of liberation occur every time a defilement is abandoned on either the path of vision or the path of cultivation. On the path of vision, the immediately successive path corresponds to the eight stages of presentiment *(kṣānti),* while the path of liberation corresponds to the eight stages of knowledge (jñāna). On the path of cultivation, where there are no stages of presentiment; both the immediately successive path and the path of liberation correspond to stages of knowledge.[120]

The *Mahāvibhāṣā,* however, explicitly anticipates and rejects any interpretation that would turn this distinction between two steps in the process of abandoning defilements into a strict dichotomy of mutually exclusive processes.[121] It does this by emphasizing that the first step, the immediately successive path, also can be said to constitute disconnection *(visaṃyoga),* in that it projects the possession of disconnection that will be effectively present in the subsequent moment of the path of liberation. Through these correspondences between the two steps in the abandonment of defilements and specific types of paths, varieties of counteragents, and stages within the path, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas underscore the importance of the abandonment of defilements as the basic dynamic underlying both the structure of the path and religious praxis. Moreover, by these correspondences they demonstrate that knowledge is important as a means for removing defilements, not as an end in itself.

Thus, for the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas, abandonment does not and cannot involve the destruction of a defilement, its dissociation from thought, or separation from its object-support; rather, abandonment is simply the interruption of the stream of its connective possessions. In considering the possibility of retrogression for an arhat, the *Mahāvibhāṣā* clearly illustrates the interdependence of Sarvāstivādin ontology and soteriological progress:

> An arhat who abandons defilements does not make them nonexistent since the characteristics and nature of past and future defilements still actually exist. If a path contrary to the defilements is not yet present in the arhat's life-stream, at such a time it is said that the defilements have not yet been abandoned. If a path contrary to the defilements is already present and the arhat abandons the possession of the connection [with those defilements] and attains the possession of [their] disconnection, then that arhat is no longer accompanied by those defilements and they are said to be abandoned.[122]

Hence even an arhat, in abandoning a given defilement, abandons only its possession and does not destroy the defilement itself. Under certain conditions, that past defilement may serve as the cause for the arising of another present defilement, causing the arhat to retrogress. Similarly, Saṅghabhadra explains abandonment as the arising of a factor contrary to a given defilement, the abandonment of the possession of that defilement, and the attainment of the possession of the disconnection from that defilement. When a defilement is abandoned, the path of the counteragent does not pluck the possession of the defilement out of the life-stream, thereby rendering the defilement forever unable to arise, for even abandoned defilements can arise once again for those whose knowledge is slight. The possibility of defilements arising is forever obstructed only in the final stage of arhatship, by the realization of the knowledge of the nonarising of defilements *(anutpādajñāna)*.[123]

## Conclusion

Underlying and organizing the intricate structure of the later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika path is the core issue of early Buddhist practice—namely, the sequential abandonment of individual defilements, which culminates in final liberation from all defilements. This path-structure continues and elaborates a tension between knowledge and concentration found in the earliest canonical accounts of the enlightenment experience. Further research is needed to explore the roots of this tension in these early Buddhist materials and to describe its resolution in the post-Abhidharma period. Yet an examination of both earlier and later Abhidharma literature shows that this tension was not resolved in favor of either option. Instead, each of the extensions and refinements of the path-structure should be seen as a systematic elaboration of methods still guided by what appears to be the original soteriological goal of the destruction of the fluxes *(āsravakṣaya)*, rather than as an attempt to displace this goal and erect either concentration or knowledge as the ultimate religious objective.

The defining characteristics of the later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika path-structure unmistakably reflect the primacy of this soteriological

goal of the destruction of the fluxes. First, religious praxis is a gradual and cumulative process on the path, and is open to both ordinary and noble persons; liberation is not a question of a sudden or privileged realization of a particular knowledge or meditative state. Second, since the goal is the abandonment of defilements, the path of cultivation *(bhāvanāmārga)* is accorded an importance equal to that of the path of vision *(darśanamārga).* The Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas assert that the path of cultivation can be practiced by both ordinary and noble persons through the repeated application of identical states of knowledge in concentration. As on the path of vision, the path of cultivation entails the application of knowledge to the four noble truths. However, only the path of cultivation results in the attainment of all the noble fruits of religious praxis, through the abandonment of defilements thought to pervade all realms and stages of the cosmos. Ordinary persons can practice the path of cultivation before entering the path of vision, but attain its ultimate fruits only after subsequently becoming noble ones and practicing the path of vision; noble persons first complete the path of vision, and can only attain the ultimate fruits of their praxis through the subsequent practice of the path of cultivation. Thus, in both cases, sudden insight into the four noble truths, which occurs on the path of vision, is insufficient for the attainment of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika ultimate soteriological goal.

Although they reached their apex in the later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika path-structure, these same concerns to balance concentration and knowledge in a path directed, ultimately, toward the destruction of the fluxes are found throughout the entire historical period of Abhidharma literature. The contribution of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas should be viewed not as discontinuous innovation, but rather as an integral part of their transmission and reconstitution of traditional doctrine and praxis in an ontologically consequent fashion. Specifically, their ontological position was shaped by demands for a coherent explanation of the arising and abandonment of defilements. And, in turn, their realistic ontology entails the refinement of the causal principle behind the arising and abandoning of defilements, also understood as real forces of contamination, and precludes any idealistic solutions in which these defilements are equated with cognitive error. Their need to find a coherent and realistic explanation of the abandonment of defilements is satisfied in the notion of possession, which forms the keystone of their theory of religious praxis. By erecting the concrete mechanism of an actually existent defilement, an actually existent possession, and an actually existent path, the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas integrated the traditional soteriological goal into their systematic metaphysics and thereby safeguarded, in their opinion, the authenticity, value, and accessibility of the original enlightenment experience.

## Notes

1. Louis de La Vallée Poussin illustrates this tension using the disagreement between Musīla and Nārada, where Musīla represents the position that knowing and seeing *(jānāmi . . . passāmi)* are sufficient for the acquisition of arhatship, and Nārada represents the challenge of meditative experience, claiming that, in addition to nonexperiential "dry" knowledge, one must also "touch [the goal] with one's own body" *(kāyena phusitvā)*. See his "Musīla et Nārada," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 5 (1936–1937): 189–222; *Saṃyuttanikāya* 12.68, *Kosambisutta,* in M. Leon Feer, ed., The *Saṃyutta-Nikāya,* 5 vols. (London: Pali Text Society, Henry Frowde, 1884–1904; hereafter *SN*), 2:115ff.; *Tsa a-han ching (Saṃyuktāgama;* hereafter *SA),* 14 no. 351 *T* 2 (99) 98c1ff.

2. See Giyū Nishi, "Shikan to chi," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 5/2 (1957): 329–340, where these tensions are used to investigate the character of the Buddha's knowledge and its relation to religious praxis. See also Mauro Bergonzi, "Osservazioni su *Samatha* e *Vipassanā* nel Buddhismo Theravāda," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 54 (1980): 143–170, 327–357.

3. Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravāda Buddhist Meditation-Theory," *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59 (1981): 605–624.

4. Lambert Schmithausen examines this tension in relation to possible origins of the Yogācāra school. See his "On the Problem of the Relation of Spiritual Practice and Philosophical Theory in Buddhism," in *German Scholars on India, Contributions to Indian Studies* 2, edited by the Cultural Department of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, New Delhi (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications, 1976), 235–250. Schmithausen also details both currents from the perspective of "liberating insight" in early Buddhist texts. See idem, "On Some Aspects of Descriptions or Theories of 'Liberating Insight' and 'Enlightenment' in Early Buddhism," in *Studien zum Jainismus und Buddhismus. Gedenkschrift für Ludwig Alsdorf,* Klaus Bruhn and Albrecht Wezler, eds., Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien 23 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1981), 199–250.

5. One notable exception is Schmithausen's "Liberating Insight," which discusses the relation between the destruction of the fluxes and concentration or knowledge in early Buddhist sūtras. Yet here even Schmithausen, apparently deemphasizing the concrete cessation of the fluxes in favor of an abstract liberating insight, states that in the stereotyped description of the enlightenment, "the special emphasis on the Cankers means a shift of the focus of attention from the final aim of Liberating Insight (viz. the cessation of Suffering) to the immediate one (viz. the cessation of the Cankers)" (ibid., p. 213). See *Majjhimanikāya* no. 4 *Bhayabheravasutta,* in V. Trenckner et al., eds., *The Majjhima-Nikāya,* 3 vols. (London: Pali Text Society, Henry Frowde, 1888–1925; hereafter *MN*), 1:21ff.

6. It is possible historically that the destruction of defilements is connected with concentration in contrast to knowledge. It is a topic for further research to determine how this connection may have contributed to the tension between concentration or the destruction of defilements on the one hand, and knowledge on the other.

7. In particular, this chapter builds upon Schmithausen's treatment of certain aspects of the problem raised in his "Liberating Insight." See note 4 above.

8. See ibid., pp. 202–207, for references to discussions of the various scriptural accounts of the enlightenment experience. Though it is generally acknowledged that Abhidharma texts postdate and presume the sūtra, it is of course

possible that any individual sūtra passage may, during the course of its ongoing transmission, have undergone revision and amplification, including influence by later Abhidharma analysis. I have drawn my references predominantly from the *Saṃyuktāgama* and *Madhyamāgama,* which have been proposed as representing the Sarvāstivādin school. See Egaku Mayeda, "Japanese Studies on the Schools of the Chinese Āgamas," in *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur* 1, Heinz Bechert, ed., Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse 3-149 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 94–103; Ernst Waldschmidt, "Central Asian Sūtra Fragments and Their Relation to the Chinese Āgamas," in *Die Sprache der ältesten buddhistischen Überlieferung,* Heinz Bechert, ed., Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse 3-117 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 136ff. For a discussion of the complex problems involved in determining the sectarian affiliation of the *Āgamas* in general and in particular the possibility of Mūlasarvāstivādin and Sarvāstivādin recensions, see Lambert Schmithausen, "Beiträge zur Schulzugehörigkeit und Textgeschichte kanonischer und postkanonischer buddhistischer Materialien," in *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur* 2, Heinz Bechert, ed., Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse 3-154 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987).

9. For a discussion of the versions of the *Dharmacakrapravartanasūtra* in Pali and Chinese translation, see André Bareau, *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapiṭaka et les Vinayapiṭaka anciens: de la quête de l'éveil à la conversion de Śāriputra et de Maudgalyāyana,* Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient 53 (Paris, 1963), 172ff., esp. 179–182, where Bareau suggests that the familiar structure of the four noble truths may have been a later development. For the central role of *āsravakṣaya* in at least one version, see *Fo-shuo san-chuan fa-lun ching, T* 2 (110) 504b1–2ff., passim, where the goal is described as one wherein "thought, having abandoned all defilements, attains liberation and is then able to realize supreme enlightenment."

10. See *Chung a-han ching (Madhyamāgama;* hereafter *MA),* 40 no. 157 *T* 1 (26) 679c12–13; 48 no. 184 *T* 1.729b21ff.; *Tseng-i a-han ching (Ekottarāgama;* hereafter *EA),* 23 *T* 2 (125) 666c15ff.; *MN* no. 4 *Bhayabheravasutta,* 1:23. Cf. P. Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu,* 2nd ed., Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series 8 (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975; hereafter *AKB*), 2.44 p. 71.14: *na tāvat bhetsyāmi paryaṅkam aprāpte āsravakṣaye.* The close relation between knowledge or vision on the one hand and the destruction of the fluxes on the other is also found in *MA* 10 no. 54 *T* 1.490a1ff.: "One who has knowledge and vision then attains the destruction of the fluxes; not one who does not have knowledge and does not have vision." Knowledge and vision are then specified as knowledge and vision of the four noble truths. See also *MA* 2 no. 10 *T* 1.431c15ff.; *MN* no. 2 *Sabbāsavasutta,* 1:6; *SA* 10 no. 263 *T* 2.67a23ff., *SN* 22.101 *Vāsijaṭasutta,* 3: 152–153.

11. Bareau, *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha,* pp. 75–91 suggests that the fourfold structure applied to the fluxes in accounts of the three clear intuitions *(vidyā)* is a later addition. Schmithausen, "Liberating Insight," pp. 205–206 responds that if we admit, as even Bareau does, the centrality of *āsrava* to these accounts, it is "preferable to consider the whole '*āsrava*-layer' as genuine"; hence the application of the fourfold structure to the *āsrava* would not be a later addition. However, one could accept both Bareau's and Schmithausen's suggestions by admitting that even though the application of the fourfold structure

to the fluxes may be a later addition, the destruction of the fluxes itself forms a central and original component of the early Buddhist religious goal. Cf. *SA* 31 nos. 884, 885, 886, esp. 885 *T* 2.223c1ff., which includes the formula describing the four noble truths but does not apply the fourfold structure to the fluxes. This disagreement concerning the priority either of the knowledge of the four noble truths or of the destruction of the fluxes is evident in the contrasting views of Erich Frauwallner (*Geschichte der indischen Philosophie,* 2 vols. (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1953), 1:216), who claims priority for the fourfold structure of the noble truths, and Ludwig Alsdorf (*Les études Jaina, État présent et taches futures* [Paris: Collège de France, 1965], 4ff.), who suggests the priority of the fluxes and their destruction.

12. For example, *SA* 10 no. 263 *T* 2.67a28, 67b27ff., *SN* 22.101 *Vāsijaṭasutta,* 3:152ff. includes in this series the four applications of mindfulness *(smṛtyupasthāna),* the four right exertions *(prahāṇa,* P. *padhāna),* the four magical powers *(ṛddhipāda),* the five controlling factors *(indriya),* the five powers *(bala),* the seven members of enlightenment *(bodhyaṅga),* and the eightfold noble path, or all together, the thirty-seven limbs *(bodhipakṣyadharma)* of enlightenment, all of which are directed toward the final attainment, the destruction of the fluxes. Or, *MA* 27 no. 107 *T* 1.596c28ff., which lists correct mindfulness, concentration, liberation, the destruction of the fluxes, and nirvāṇa. Cf. also *SA* 41 no. 1140 *T* 2.301b6ff.; and *MN* no. 17 *Vanapatthasutta,* 1:104ff.

13. See *MN* no. 112 *Chabbisodhanasutta,* 3:30ff. The corresponding passage in the Chinese version of the *Madhyamāgama* reads "liberation of thought [through the] destruction of the fluxes." See *MA* 49 no. 187 *T* 1.732a28ff.

14. For example, see Dines Andersen and Helmer Smith, eds., *Sutta-nipāta* (1913; rpt. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), no. 163 p. 29, no. 178 p. 31, no. 374 p. 65, no. 539 p. 100, no. 546 p. 101, nos. 1082–1083 p. 209. See also *SA* 22 no. 579 *T* 2.154a28; ibid. no. 581 *T* 2.154b24ff., *SN* 1.3.5 *Arahantasutta,* 1:14ff.; *SA* 5 no. 103 *T* 2.30a7, *SN* 22.89 *Khemakasutta,* 3:128; *SA* 45 no. 1199 *T* 2.326b11; ibid. 14 no. 351 *T* 2.98c1ff., *SN* 12.68 *Kosambisutta,* 2:117. See also Bareau, *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha,* pp. 72–74.

15. For various histories and tentative chronologies of northern Indian Abhidharma texts, see Hajime Sakurabe, *Kusharon no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1969), 41ff.; Ryūjō Yamada, *Daijō Bukkyō seiritsu ron josetsu* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1959), 69ff.; Baiyū Watanabe, *Ubu abidatsumaron no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1954), 135ff.; and Erich Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien II. Die kanonischen Abhidharma-Werke," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* 8 (1964): 59–99.

16. *A-p'i-ta-mo ta-p'i-p'o-sha lun (Mahāvibhāṣā;* hereafter *MVB)* 94 *T* 27 (1545) 487c19.

17. *MVB* 66 *T* 27.343a4ff., 47 *T* 27.244c6ff. See also *A-p'i-ta-mo chi-i-men tsu-lun (Saṅgītiparyāya;* hereafter *SP)* 4 *T* 26 (1536) 383a10–11: "If, monks, the [three] fluxes of desire, existence, and ignorance have been abandoned, then since all the fluxes are eternally destroyed, being without stain, one experiences nirvāṇa." See also the conclusion of the *A-p'i-t'an kan-lu-wei lun (*Abhidharmāmṛta) T* 28 (1553) 980b16–17: "When all fluxes are destroyed, one attains the destruction of all suffering, one attains the nectar of all knowledge."

18. For the four noble fruits of religious praxis *(śrāmaṇyaphala),* including that of the stream-enterer *(srotaāpanna),* the once-returner *(sakṛdāgamin),* the nonreturner *(anāgamin),* and the arhat, see *A-p'i-ta-mo fa-yün tsu-lun (Dharmaskandha;* hereafter *DS)* 3 *T* 26 (1537) 463c7ff.; Valentina Stache-Rosen, *Das Saṅgītisūtra und sein Kommentar Saṅgītiparyāya Teil 1. Dogmatische Begriffsreihen im älteren Bud-*

*dhismus 2-1* (hereafter *SR-SP*), Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden 9, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Institut für Orientforschung 65, 1-2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1968), 98; *SP* 6 *T* 26.392c22ff.; *She-li-fu a-p'i-t'an lun* (**Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra;* hereafter *ŚAŚ*) 4 *T* 28 (1548) 553c8ff.; *MVB* 51 *T* 27.236b20ff., 64 *T* 27.332b2ff., 65 *T* 27.335a29ff., 140 *T* 27.719b27. Each fruit is defined in accordance with the abandonment of specific defilements associated with specific realms or stages. The first fruit of the stream-enterer is attained when one has completely abandoned the three fetters *(saṃyojana),* or the eighty-eight varieties of contaminants that are to be abandoned within the path of vision *(darśanamārga),* and so on, up to the fruit of the sixth and final type of arhat, the unshakable arhat *(akopyadharman),* who has eradicated all the defilements of all realms and stages, and who gives rise to the knowledge of the nonarising of future defilements *(anutpādajñāna).* See Hajime Sakurabe, *Sonzai no bunseki. Abidaruma, Bukkyō no shisō* 2 (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1969), 121.

19. See *MVB* 46 *T* 27.239c10ff. For an analysis of this process according to the seven types of religious practitioners *(pudgala),* see *MVB* 54 *T* 27.278a8ff.

20. See *MVB* 60 *T* 27.312b6ff. The possibility of retrogression becomes a controversial point in Abhidharma texts that postdate the composition of the *Vibhāṣā* compendia.

21. See *MVB* 46 *T* 27.240b20, 96 *T* 27.496b18.

22. See ibid. 94 *T* 27.487b29ff., where other etymologies are also given. Cf. *Aṅguttaranikāya* 7.9.8 *Arahāsutta,* Robert Morris and E. Hardy, eds., *The Aṅguttara-Nikāya,* 5 vols. (London: Pali Text Society, Henry Frowde, 1885-1910; hereafter *AN*), 4:145.

23. See *DS* 3 *T* 26.464a1ff. See also *MVB* 47 *T* 27.246b29ff. See *AKB* 6.58b p. 376.18ff. for an implicit definition of arhatship as a state in which the fluxes are destroyed *(kṣīṇāsrava).* For the three varieties of fluxes, see *SR-SP* 68; *SP* 4 *T* 26.383a4ff., 425b23ff.; *DS* 3 *T* 26.465b8ff., 491a27ff.; *MVB* 47 *T* 27.243c20ff.; *A-p'i-ta-mo shun cheng-li lun (Nyāyānusāra;* hereafter *NAS)* 53 *T* 29 (1562) 640b18ff.; *AKB* 5.35 p. 306.2ff.

24. Each of the four noble fruits of religious praxis *(śrāmaṇyaphala)* has conditioned and unconditioned varieties, with the unconditioned variety in each case referring to the cessation of specific defilements that are abandoned with the attainment of that particular fruit. For this definition of the arhat, see *SP* 7 *T* 26.393a3ff. The *Dharmaskandha* (*DS* 3 *T* 26.465a17ff.) defines the unconditioned fruit of arhatship as "having forever abandoned all defilements of lust, hatred, and delusion, and so on, having crossed over all rebirth states, having abandoned all paths, having forever extinguished the three fires [of lust, hatred, and delusion], having crossed over the four floods [of lust, existence, views, and ignorance] . . . ," and so on. The *Prakaraṇapāda (A-p'i-ta-mo p'in-lei tsu-lun;* hereafter *PP),* 7 *T* 26 (1542) 719a5ff., cites the same definition, substituting the term "abandonment of fetters" *(saṃyojanaprahāṇa)* for the term "cessation resulting from consideration" *(pratisaṃkhyānirodha).* The *Mahāvibhāṣā* cites this definition of the arhat from the *Prakaraṇapāda* (*MVB* 65 *T* 27.337c2ff.) and another from the *Prajñaptiśāstra* (ibid. 65 *T* 27.338a1ff.), which is very similar to the definition found in the *Dharmaskandha.* Another early Abhidharma text, the **Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* (*ŚAŚ* 4 *T* 28.554a6ff.), offers a series of four definitions of the arhat, all of which involve the abandonment or destruction of defilements.

25. *ŚAŚ* 18 *T* 28.646a10ff. For a discussion of the dating and school affiliation of the **Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra,* see Taiken Kimura, *Abidatsuma ron no kenkyū*

(Tokyo: Meiji shoten, 1937), 67ff.; André Bareau, "Les origines du Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra," *Muséon* 43 (1950): 69–95.

26. *A-p'i-ta-mo fa-chih tsu-lun (Jñānaprasthāna;* hereafter *JP)* 3 *T* 26 (1544) 929b13ff. Cf. *MVB* 46 *T* 27.236b20ff.; *AKB* 5.35 p. 306.2ff. These sixteen are: three fetters *(saṃyojana),* three unvirtuous roots *(akuśalamūla),* three fluxes *(āsrava),* four floods *(ogha),* four connections *(yoga),* four attachments *(grahaṇa),* four ties to the body *(kāyagrantha),* five hindrances *(nivaraṇa),* five fetters *(saṃyojana),* five fetters belonging to the lower realms *(avarabhāgīyasaṃyojana),* five fetters belonging to the upper realms *(ūrdhvabhāgīyasaṃyojana),* five views *(dṛṣṭi),* the group of six desires *(kāmakāya),* seven contaminants *(anuśaya),* nine fetters *(saṃyojana),* and ninety-eight contaminants *(anuśaya).* The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (*MVB* 46 *T* 27.236b21ff.) notes that all of these categories appear in the sūtra with the exception of the five fetters, which are cited first in the *Jñānaprasthāna* (*JP* 3 *T* 26 (1544) 929b20ff.), and the ninety-eight varieties of contaminants, which are implied in sections of the *Dharmaskandha* (*DS* 3 *T* 26.464c25ff.) and first explicitly mentioned in the *Prakaraṇapāda* (*PP* 2 *T* 26 (1542) 698b6ff., 3 *T* 26 (1542) 702a8ff., passim). This disparity between the sūtras and the Abhidharma precipitates a lengthy discussion in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* on the role of Abhidharma texts as commentary on the sūtras, on their principles of interpretation, and on the differences between Buddhist and non-Buddhist methods of interpretation.

27. See *DS* 6 *T* 26.481a8–9, passim; *SP* 3 *T* 26.376a28, 4 *T* 26.383a7–8, 8 *T* 26.399c3, passim; *A-p'i-ta-mo shih-shen tsu-lun (Vijñānakāya;* hereafter *VK),* 1 *T* 26 (1539) 531b16–17, passim; *PP* 1 *T* 26 (1542) 692c3ff., passim. Cf. Ryōzaburō Sakaki, comp., *Mahāvyutpatti,* Suzuki gakujutsu zaidan, Reprint Series (1916; rpt. Tokyo: Suzuki gakujutsu zaidan, 1973), nos. 2134–2139, p. 160, which inserts *paryutthāna* between *anuśaya* and *upakleśa.* See *PP* 1 *T* 26 (1542) 693a27ff., where the individual members of each category are given. For the identification of *kleśa* with *āsrava,* see *A-p'i-t'an shin lun (*Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra;* hereafter *AHŚ-D)* *T* 28 (1550) 809b13; *A-p'i-t'an shin lun ching* (**Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra;* hereafter AHŚ-U) *T* 28 (1551) 834b27ff.; *Tsa a-p'i-t'an shin lun (*Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra;* hereafter *SAHŚ)* 1 *T* 28 (1552) 871a23ff.

28. *MVB* 47 *T* 27.244a17ff.

29. See ibid. 47 *T* 27.244b4, 48 *T* 27.247a19, 48 *T* 27.249a6, 48 *T* 27.249c11, 48 *T* 27.250a27ff., 49 *T* 27.252b7ff.

30. "Contaminant," or *anuśaya,* is perhaps the term for defilement used least in the sūtras. See Sakurabe, *Sonzai no bunseki,* pp. 115ff. Frauwallner suggests that it is precisely because the term "contaminant" was loose in meaning and infrequently used in the sūtra that it became the convenient focus of Abhidharma elaboration. See Erich Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien III. Der Abhisamayavādaḥ," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 15 (1971): 75ff. For an examination of the definitions given for *anuśaya* in the versions of the *Vibhāṣā* and later texts, see Hiromichi Katō, "Zuimen no hataraki," *Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 38 (1982): 33ff. Cf. Kenyō Mitomo, "Anuśaya no gogi to sono kaishaku," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 23/2 (1975): 1007–1002.

31. *MVB* 60 *T* 27.313a1ff. Cf. *NAS* 45 *T* 29.598c16ff. Étienne Lamotte discusses a distinction between defilements *(kleśa)* and their traces *(vāsanā)* in early Buddhist and Abhidharma texts. See his "Passions and Impregnations of the Passions in Buddhism," in *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I. B. Horner,* L. Cousins et al., eds. (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel, 1974), 91–104.

32. That is, *anuśaya* means "subtle" as derived from *aṇu,* or "minute." *AHŚ-U* *T* 28 (1551) 846c27. The four pseudo-etymologies offered here for *anuśaya* are also found in *PP* 3 *T* 26 (1542) 702a24ff. Cf. *Tsun p'o-hsü-mi p'u-sa so-chi*

*lun (*Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītiśāstra)* *T* 28 (1549) 774c14ff. These etymologies are not given in Dharmaśrī's *AHŚ-D* *T* 28 (1550) 817a9ff. Cf. *SAHŚ* 4 *T* 28.902c17ff.; *MVB* 50 *T* 27.257a26ff.; *Pi-p'o-sha lun (*Vibhāṣāśāstra;* hereafter *VB)* 3 *T* 28 (1547) 436a29ff.; *AKB* 5.39 p. 308.9ff.; Unrai Wogihara, ed., *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā: The Work of Yaśomitra* (Tokyo: The Publishing Association of the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā,* 1932; hereafter *SAKV*), 487.32ff.

33. *A-p'i-t'an kan-lu-wei lun (*Abhidharmāmṛta)* *T* 28.968c24ff. See *MVB* 179 *T* 27.899a23, and the references in Hiromichi Katō, "Zuimen no hataraki. 'Kusharon' shosetsu no zuimen no jyūji," *Shūgakuin ronshū* 53 (1982): note 1, pp. 17–20, which gives four interpretations of the method by which the number 108 is generated, all of which assume the addition of the ten manifestly active defilements to the ninety-eight contaminants. For the analysis of the fluxes *(āsrava)* into 108 varieties, see *A-p'i-t'an p'i-p'o-sha lun (*Abhidharmavibhāṣā;* hereafter *AVB),* 26 *T* 28 (1546) 189a19ff.; *VB* 2 *T* 28.425a1ff.; *MVB* 47 *T* 27.243c21. For this analysis applied to the floods *(ogha),* see *AVB* 26 *T* 28.192b6ff.; *MVB* 48 *T* 27.247a9ff. For this analysis applied to the varieties of grasping *(upādāna),* see *AVB* 26 *T* 28.192c27ff.; *MVB* 48 *T* 27.247b28.

34. See *MVB* 49 *T* 27.253b20–21. See also ibid. 22 *T* 27.113a27–28, 41 *T* 27.313c22ff., 162 *T* 27.819b27–28. The *Prakaraṇapāda* (*PP* 6 *T* 26 (1542) 715c17ff.) defines *kleśa* and *paryavasthāna* in terms of each other, but then uses *paryavasthāna* to refer to the functioning of *kleśa.* Though *anuśaya* is not contrasted with *paryavasthāna* in this passage, it is noteworthy that *paryavasthāna* is used for defilements in their active phase.

35. See *MVB* 50 *T* 27.257b18ff., *VB* 3 *T* 28.436b17ff. Cf. *NAS* 45 *T* 29.599b28ff. See also Genjun Sasaki, "Bonnō no honshitsu," in idem, ed., *Bonnō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Shimizukobundo, 1975), 104ff., and Yukiō Sakamoto, "Bonnō to gō," in idem, *Abidatsuma no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1981), 382ff.

36. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and later texts emphasize this sense of growing. Junshō Katō suggests an evolution of the meaning of *anuśerate* from an early meaning as "adhering," which was prevalent up to the period of the *Saṃyuktābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* (*SAHŚ* 1 *T* 28.871a17), in which the new meaning of "growing" is used. Katō proposes that the first Sarvāstivādin text to use *anuśerate* in this new sense of "growing" is the *Ju a-p'i-ta-mo lun (*Abhidharmāvatāraśāstra)* *T* 28 (1554) 983c9ff. See Junshō Katō, "Uro muro no kitei," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 29/2 (1973): 637. There are indeed passages in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (*MVB* 22 *T* 27.111c13ff.) that include both *anuśerate* and *vardhante,* or "growing," in the same phrase, thereby suggesting a meaning for *anuśerate* other than growing. Other passages (*MVB* 86 *T* 27.442c4ff.) gloss *anuśerate* with "binding." By comparing the translation of pertinent sections of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra,* Hiromichi Katō concludes that the translation of *anuśerate* as "growing," which appears also in the translation of early Sarvāstivādin texts, may be attributable to Hsüan-tsang. See H. Katō, "Zuimen no hataraki," pp. 38–39.

37. For this third sense of contaminants as *anubadhnanti,* or "binding," and its relation to a fourth sense as *anugata,* or "pervasive," which is cited in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* as the view of Buddhist teachers from other regions, see H. Katō, "Zuimen no hataraki," pp. 42–45.

38. *AHŚ-D* 2 *T* 28 (1550) 817c27ff.; *AHŚ-U* 3 *T* 28 (1551) 848b1ff.; *SAHŚ* 4 *T* 28.907b20ff. Cf. the reference in *AKB* 5.2a p. 278.11: *cittakleśakaratvād āvaraṇatvāc chubhair viruddhatvāt.* For the second line of this verse, see ibid. p. 278.15: *kuśalasya co 'palambhād aviprayuktā atha ihā 'nuśayāḥ.* Cf. *SAKV* 443.17ff.

39. *AKB* 5.2a p. 277.17ff.; *SAKV* 442.28ff.; *NAS* 45 *T* 29.596c24ff.; Padmanabh S. Jaini, ed., *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti,* Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series 4 (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1977; hereafter *ADV*), nos. 261–262, pp. 220.5ff.

40. For the Mahāsāṅghika view, see Vasumitra's *I-pu-tsung lun lun (*Samayabhedoparacanacakra)* *T* 49 (2031) 15c28ff.

41. *AKB* 5.2 p. 278.5ff.; *SAKV* 444.15ff.; *NAS* 45 *T* 29.599b28ff.

42. See *MVB* 16 *T* 27.80c1ff.; *AKB* 2.34d p. 62.9; *SAKV* 142.6ff.

43. For the Vātsīputrīya position that contaminants are dissociated, see *MVB* 2 *T* 27.8b23. Cf. *NAS* 45 *T* 29.599b28ff.; *SAKV* 444.3ff.

44. *AKB* 5.2a p. 278.17ff.

45. See *NAS* 45 *T* 29.598c16ff. For the refutation of this view on the grounds that a cause and effect cannot be different from one another as dissociated and associated, see *SAHŚ* 4 *T* 28.907c12ff. Cf. *NAS* 45 *T* 29.597b27ff. for the position of the Dārṣṭāntika master Sthavira (or Śrīlāta), who identifies the contaminant with the secondary element *(*anudhātu),* which functions as the cause to produce active defilements.

46. Saṅghabhadra (*NAS* 45 *T* 29.599b27–28) notes that this Vibhajyavādin position is to be expected, given their rejection of the existence of past and future factors.

47. This list of synonyms includes the connections (yoga), grasping *(upādāna),* floods *(ogha),* and fluxes *(āsrava).* See Dharmaśrī's *AHŚ-D* 2 *T* 28 (1550) 817a13ff.; Upaśānta's *AHŚ-U* 3 *T* 28 (1551) 847a3ff.; *SAHŚ* 4 *T* 28.903b17ff.; *AKB* 5.35 p. 306.2ff.; *NAS* 53 *T* 29.640b18ff. Cf. ibid. 45 *T* 29.599b10ff. The *Abhidharmadīpa* (*ADV* no. 260 p. 219.10ff.) lists defilements *(kleśa),* contaminants *(anuśaya),* fluxes *(āsrava),* fetters *(saṃyojana),* ties *(grantha),* connections (yoga), and floods *(ogha)* as synonyms. See also *NAS* 2 *T* 29.340b1ff., where Saṅghabhadra explains that even though the sūtra only uses the term "fluxes" *(āsrava)* to describe those defilements from which an arhat attains liberation, it actually intends the other varieties of defilements as well, since an arhat is liberated from all defilements *(kleśa)* and subsidiary defilements *(upakleśa).* *NAS* 48 *T* 29.615b26ff. states explicitly that the various categories of defilements include one another.

48. See *EA* 34 *T* 2.738c23ff.; *AN* 7.8 *Saṃyojanasutta* 4:7, *AN* 7.11–12 *Anusayasutta* (1–2) 4:9; *SR-SP* 184; *SP* 17 *T* 26.439a18ff.; *PP* 1 *T* 26 (1542) 693b28ff.; *MVB* 50 *T* 27.257a18ff.; *AVB* 27 *T* 28.200a10ff.; *VB* 3 *T* 28.436a22ff.

49. *MVB* 46 *T* 27.239a5. Cf. Eduard Müller, ed., *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* (London: Pali Text Society, Henry Frowde, 1885), 197 for these ten identified as fetters *(saṃyojana).* For an interpretation of the transition from seven to ten contaminants, see Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien III," pp. 75–76.

50. See Sakurabe, *Sonzai no bunseki,* (chart), p. 121. See *PP* 3 *T* 26 (1542) 702a8ff., 7 *T* 26 (1542) 719c15ff.; *JP* 14 *T* 26 (1544) 992b9ff.; *MVB* 50 *T* 27.259b18ff., 145 *T* 27.743a12ff. Among the ninety-eight contaminants, thirty-six belong to the realm of desire, thirty-one to the realm of form, and thirty-one to the formless realm. In accordance with the cognitive stages of the path, there are twenty-eight contaminants to be abandoned by vision of the noble truth of suffering, nineteen by vision of the noble truth of the origin of suffering, nineteen by vision of the noble truth of the cessation of suffering, twenty-two by vision of the noble truth of the path leading to this cessation, and ten by the path of cultivation. Combining the cognitive stages and the cosmic realms, eighty-eight contaminants are to be abandoned by the path of vision and ten by the path of cultivation. Among the thirty-six contaminants belonging to the realm of desire, thirty-two are to be abandoned by the path of vision and four by the

path of cultivation; among the thirty-one belonging to both the realm of form and the formless realm, in each case, twenty-eight are to be abandoned by the path of vision and three by the path of cultivation. Of interest here is a text entitled *A-p'i-t'an chiu-shih-ba chieh ching* in one volume (i.e., The Abhidharma Sūtra on the Ninety-eight Fetters or Contaminants) cited in the catalogue of the fifth- to sixth-century bibliographer Seng-yu, but apparently lost even in his time. See *Ch'u san-tsang chi-chi* 2 *T* 55 (2145) 6b1.

51. For an extensive discussion of practices attested in the sūtra, their relation to early Abhidharma practices, and the history of the development of the distinctive Abhidharma path in early Sarvāstivādin texts, see Yamada, *Daijō Bukkyō,* pp. 40–136.

52. See *SP* 8 *T* 26.401c24ff.; *DS* 4 *T* 26 472a7ff.; *PP* 2 *T* 26 (1542) 697b3ff., 3 *T* 26 (1542) 702a8ff., 7 *T* 26 (1542) 719c14ff., 12 *T* 26 (1542) 741c18ff., passim.

53. Cf. the account of the history and development of the later Sarvāstivādin path-structure proposed by Frauwallner (in his "Abhidharma-Studien III"), who concludes that this structure found its first expression in the *Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* as the innovation of the individual master, Dharmaśrī.

54. *VK* 4 *T* 26.548c4ff.

55. Ibid. *T* 26.551a21ff., passim. For the four varieties of knowledge as applied to the noble truths, namely, knowledge of suffering, of the origin of suffering, of its cessation, and of the path, see *SR-SP* 100; *SP* 7 *T* 26.393c27ff.; *PP* 5 *T* 26 (1542) 712b10–11.

56. The term *"dharmajñāna"* is ambiguous: "dharma" can refer to the doctrine, as possibly in *MVB* 106 *T* 27.549b21; cf. *AKB* 6.26c p. 350.20; *SAKV* 542.11ff.; Wilhelm and Magdalene Geiger, *Pali Dhamma vornehmlich in der kanonischen Literatur* (1920), in Heinz Bechert, ed., *(Wilhelm Geiger) Kleine Schriften zur Indologie und Buddhismuskunde,* Glasenapp-Stiftung 6 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1973), 149–151. Or, "dharma" can refer to those factors belonging to the realm of desire specifically, as in the *Saṅgītiparyāya* (*SP* 7 *T* 26.393c14ff.), in which case *"anvayajñāna"* would refer to the subsequent knowledge of those factors belonging to the realm of form and the formless realm. Cf. *SAKV* 616.29ff., which quotes a śāstra passage, identical to the *Saṅgītiparyāya* passage referred to above: *dharmajñānaṃ katamat. kāmapratisaṃyukteṣu saṃskāreṣu yad anāsravaṃ jñānaṃ. . . . anvayajñānaṃ katamat. rūpārūpyapratisaṃyukteṣu saṃskāreṣu yad anāsravaṃ jñānaṃ.* Wogihara suggests that the śāstra referred to here is the *Jñānaprasthāna* (*JP* 8 *T* 26 (1544) 957b19ff.).

57. This pair appears in early Sarvāstivādin texts in a list of four varieties of knowledge including, in addition to the preceding pair, the knowledge of other people's thoughts *(paracittajñāna)* and conventional knowledge *(saṃvṛtijñāna).* See *SR-SP* 100; *SP* 7 *T* 26.393c14ff. Cf. *ŚAŚ* 23 *T* 28.672c3–4. These four varieties of knowledge are combined with the four knowledges of the noble truths, the knowledge of destruction *(kṣayajñāna),* and the knowledge of nonarising *(anutpādajāna)* to form the ten varieties of knowledge characteristic of later Abhidharma texts. See *PP* 1 *T* 26 (1542) 694b4ff. For various theories as to the number of knowledges, see *MVB* 148 *T* 27.756c20ff.

58. See *ŚAŚ* 10 *T* 28.598b20ff.

59. For the relation between presentiment *(kṣānti)* and knowledge (jñāna), see *MVB* 95 *T* 27.489b19ff., 95 *T* 27.490b17ff.

60. *SP* 4 *T* 26.383a27ff.; cf. *SR-SP* 68–69. This passage appears in an explanation of the objective of disciplined conduct or of the religious life *(brahmacaryaiṣaṇā),* which constitutes the last of the three objectives *(eṣaṇā).*

61. *VK* 4 *T* 26.551a15ff.

62. See *AHŚ-D* 2 *T* 28 (1550) 818a10ff.; *AHŚ-U* 3 *T* 28 (1551) 848b16ff.; *SAHŚ* 5 *T* 28.907c24ff. For the dating of the *Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* prior to the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and contemporaneous with the *Jñānaprasthāna,* see Yamada, *Daijō Bukkyō,* pp. 111ff.; Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien III," pp. 71–72. For the provenance of the text, see Watanabe, *Ubu abidatsumaron,* pp. 123ff.

63. See Robert Buswell's chapter in this volume. See *MVB* 6 *T* 27.29c13, 6 *T* 27.30a2ff. The *Jñānaprasthāna* refers to only three of the four preparatory stages of penetration (omitting *kṣānti*) to be practiced prior to the path of vision: *JP* 1 *T* 26 (1544) 918a7ff. All four preparatory stages do appear in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (esp. *MVB* 5 *T* 27.23c15ff.).

64. For a passage indicating that it is the cessation of defilements that is experienced with one's own body *(kāyasākṣin),* see *MVB* 23 *T* 27.115b17ff.

65. *PP* 6 *T* 26 (1542) 715c22ff.: "What factors are actively defiled? Defiled *(kliṣṭa)* thought and thought-concomitants. What factors are not actively defiled? Undefiled thought and thought-concomitants, material form, unconditioned factors, and forces dissociated from thought."

66. See Sakamoto, "Bonnō to gō," pp. 380–381; H. Katō, "Zuimen no hataraki," pp. 29–32; Sasaki, "Bonnō no honshitsu," pp. 78–83, 98–104. Cf. *MVB* 47 *T* 27.244c1. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (ibid. 50 *T* 27.257c5ff.) identifies the ultimate effect of each of the seven contaminants as a particular rebirth state: lust for sense pleasures results in rebirth as a dove, a small bird, or a mandarin drake or duck; hostility, in rebirth as a bee, a grub, or a poisonous snake; lust for existence, in rebirth in the realm of form and the formless realm; and so on. Similarly, the *Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* (*AHŚ-D* 2 *T* 28 (1550) 815b15ff.; *AHŚ-U* (1551) 843c24ff.) declares that contaminants are the root of all existences and accompany action to produce the one hundred varieties of suffering.

67. *SAHŚ* 4 *T* 28.899c20ff. This list of ten functions also appears in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (*AKB* 5.1aff. p. 277.3ff.; *SAKV* 441.1ff.), and the *Nyāyānusāra* (*NAS* 45 *T* 29.596a21ff.), which includes an additional six. For a detailed examination of these sixteen functions, see H. Katō, "Zuimen no hataraki. 'Kusharon' shosetsu no zuimen no jyūji," pp. 3ff.; idem, "Zuimen no hataraki," pp. 52ff.

68. See *PP* 3 *T* 26 (1542) 702b15ff.; *MVB* 61 *T* 27.313b18ff., 61 *T* 27.313c18ff.; *AKB* 5.34 p. 305.16ff.; *SAKV* 485.2ff.; *NAS* 53 *T* 29.638c29ff., 722b1ff.; *ADV* no. 359b–d p. 295.18ff. The context of this discussion in the *Mahāvibhāṣā,* but not in the *Prakaraṇapāda,* is the relation between the arising of defilements and the occurrence of retrogression *(parihāṇi).* That the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and *Nyāyānusāra* depend directly on one of the versions of the *Vibhāṣā* as their source for these three reasons is indicated by their subsequent reference to retrogression. See *AKB* 5.34 p. 306.1; *NAS* 53 *T* 29.639a26ff. Saṅghabhadra (*NAS* 53 *T* 29.638c9ff.) also lists as many as twelve specific causes for the arising of defilements, all of which, he claims, can be summarized by these three conditions: for example, good fortune, false teachings, sleeping too much, eating, one's stage in life, or one's habits, and so on.

69. Yaśomitra (*SAKV* 485.2–3) cites, without acknowledgement, the first two of these three reasons given by Saṅghabhadra, and correlates them with *aprahīṇa* and *aparijñāta,* respectively. Such a correlation is not evident in Hsüan-tsang's translation of the *Nyāyānusāra.*

70. Yaśomitra (*SAKV* 485.4–6) indicates his awareness of an ambiguity in the interpretation of the relation between *kāmarāgānuśaya* and *paryavasthāna* by providing two interpretations of this second condition: *kāmarāgasya paryavasthānīyā anukūlā iti. kāmarāga eva vā paryavasthānaṃ kāmarāgaparyavasthānaṃ. tasmai hitāḥ*

*kāmarāgaparyavasthānīyāḥ.* "[The compound] *'kāmarāgaparyavasthānīya'* [should be understood as] those [object-fields that] are conducive, [that is,] suitable to the manifestation of [the contaminant,] lust for sense pleasures. [Or, the compound] *'kāmarāgaparyavasthāna'* [should be interpreted as] the manifestly active defilement that is precisely [the contaminant,] lust for sense pleasures. [The gerundive *'paryavasthānīyā'* indicates] those that benefit that [lust for sense pleasures]; [therefore,] those that are conducive to the manifestly active defilement, lust for sense pleasures."

71. *NAS* 53 *T* 29.639b4ff. Cf. *MVB* 86 *T* 27.442c4ff.

72. Yaśomitra (*SAKV* 485.8–9) explains incorrect attention as "the contiguous condition *(samantarapratyaya)* that is erroneous with regard to a presently appearing object-field" *(tatra cā 'bhāsagateṣu viṣayeṣu viparītaḥ samanantarapratyaya ity arthaḥ).*

73. *MVB* 61 *T* 27.313c22ff. Cf. *NAS* 55 *T* 29.650b13ff.

74. In contrast, the Dārṣṭāntikas reject this realistic ontology, denying that either the contaminants or the object-support actually exist as real entities in the three time periods. The object-support of a given defilement is therefore not an actually existent entity but merely the product of misapprehension. They also maintain a distinction between latent contaminants *(anuśaya),* which exist in the life-stream as seeds, and manifestly active defilements *(paryavasthāna)* produced by these seeds. As potentialities, these contaminants cannot be said to be either associated with or dissociated from thought. See *MVB* 22 *T* 27.110a22ff., 85 *T* 27.442a4ff. Cf. *NAS* 49 *T* 29.617a4ff., where these views are attributed to Śrīlāta.

75. For those who support the view that thought continues as an unchanging stream upon which defilements are superimposed, see *MVB* 22 *T* 27.110a10ff.

76. In general, a moment of thought can be said to have contaminants *(sānuśaya)* either because contaminants adhere or grow in dependence on it or because contaminants are associated with it. However, a moment of thought that has contaminants only as a result of association is not considered to be defiled. See *MVB* 22 *T* 27.110b13ff.; *AKB* 5.32 p. 304.5ff. Cf. *NAS* 53 *T* 29.637c7ff., which, referring to the *Jñānaprasthāna* (*JP* 1 *T* 26 (1544) 921a11ff.), states: "What is 'adhering' or 'growing' *(anuśerate)?* It refers to the fact that contaminants are associated with this [moment of] thought, are dependent upon thought, and not yet abandoned. What is 'not adhering' or 'not growing' *(na anuśerate)?* It refers to the fact that contaminants are [still] associated with this [moment of] thought, and yet one has already attained complete abandonment [of them]."

77. See *JP* 1 *T* 26 (1544) 921a19ff: "Are contaminants of a given [moment of] thought to be abandoned? They are either to be abandoned or not to be abandoned. Which are those to be abandoned? They are those contaminants that depend upon this [moment of] thought. Which are those that are not to be abandoned? They are those contaminants that are associated with this [moment of] thought." Cf. also *MVB* 22 *T* 27.113b11ff.: "In this [passage from the *Jñānaprasthāna*] it is indicated that contaminants [functioning] with regard to the object-support can be said to be abandoned, not [those functioning] with regard to associated [factors]. That is to say, one can regulate defilements [functioning] with regard to an object-support, making them not arise in the present and not construct error; it is not the case that one can regulate defilements [functioning] with regard to associated [factors,] making them no longer associated with thought." Cf. *AKB* 5.61 p. 320.17ff.; *NAS* 55 *T* 29.651a6ff. Cf. *MVB* 22 *T* 27.113b25ff.: "However, in this [passage] the statement, 'contaminants [func-

tioning] with regard to the object-support can be abandoned, and not those [functioning] with regard to associated factors,' is made from the perspective of [whether or not] thought is said to be possessed of contaminants, and not from the perspective of [the contaminant] functioning as adhering or growing, because this functioning as adhering or growing in both senses [with regard to the object-support and associated factors] can be abandoned."

78. For a discussion of these two types of contaminants and their basis either in the object-support or in associated factors, see *MVB* 22 *T* 27.111c17ff. esp. 22 *T* 27.112c28ff.; *AKB* 5.18 p. 289.16ff.; *NAS* 49 *T* 29.616b22ff.; *AKB* 5.39 p. 308.11–12; *NAS* 53 *T* 29.641c14ff. (parts of which are quoted, without attribution, by Yaśomitra, *SAKV* 488.2ff.); *ADV* p. 242.18ff.; H. Katō, "Zuimen no hataraki," pp. 36–42; and Sakamoto, "Bonnō to gō," pp. 387ff. For the interpretations of various Sarvāstivādin masters, see *MVB* 22 *T* 27.112a14ff.

79. See *NAS* 53 *T* 29.637c16ff. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (*MVB* 22 *T* 27.113a10ff.) attributes to Vasumitra a fourfold explanation of the adherence or growth of contaminants: (1) they stimulate evil, as when the evil conduct of one person stimulates that in others; (2) they are like the heat of a fire, which pervades completely a small water vessel; (3) they are like smoke, as when clothes permeated by smoke become dirty; (4) they are capable of censure, as when an entire community of monks is punished for the offense of a single person. As H. Katō notes ("Zuimen no hataraki," p. 39), this fourfold explanation emphasizes the influence of contaminants on other thought-concomitants. For a later definition of growth or adherence as the fact that "contaminants are established and grow with regard to a certain factor: that is to say, they bind and increase stain," see *NAS* 49 *T* 29.616b12ff.

80. See *MVB* 22 *T* 27.113a23ff.

81. *JP* 1 *T* 26 (1544) 921a22; *MVB* 22 *T* 27.113b29ff.

82. See *MVB* 22 *T* 27.113c5ff., 22 *T* 27.114a9ff. Cf. *NAS* 55 *T* 29.649c18.

83. See *MVB* 22 *T* 27.113c21ff., 22 *T* 27.114a10ff., 22 *T* 27.114a18ff. Cf. *NAS* 55 *T* 29.650a3ff.; *ADV* nos. 385–386 pp. 317ff.

84. For the views of Kṣemadatta, who offers four methods, see *MVB* 22 *T* 27.114b2ff.; for the views of Vasumitra, who offers five, see ibid. *T* 27.114b6ff.

85. *AHŚ-U* 3 *T* 28 (1551) 847c27ff.; *SAHŚ* 4 *T* 28.906a13ff. This list does not appear in Dharmaśrī's *Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra*. The *Saṃyukābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* (*SAHŚ* 4 *T* 28.906a18–19) also includes a list of five methods, which are the opposite of Kṣemadatta's fivefold explanation of the adherence or growth of past and future contaminants cited previously (see *MVB* 22 *T* 27.113b4ff.): (1) the cause of the contaminants is forever terminated; (2) their possession is abandoned; (3) their material basis has been transmuted; (4) their object-support is known; and (5) their counteragent is obtained.

86. See *AKB* 5.60 p. 319.19ff.; *SAKV* 498.9ff.; *NAS* 55 *T* 29.649c18ff.

87. See Hiromichi Katō, "Danwakuron kara mita kujūhachi zuimen," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 30/1 (1981): 303–306.

88. Saṅghabhadra (*NAS* 55 *T* 29.650a27ff.) attempts to resolve the apparent inconsistency between these three methods, each appropriate in the case of certain varieties of contaminants, and his previous general statement (ibid. *T* 27.649c18ff.) that contaminants are abandoned as a result of insight observing their object-support.

89. Saṅghabhadra (*NAS* 55 *T* 27.650c2ff.) explains that even though the path of the counteragent is applied specifically to defilements that are to be abandoned by the path of cultivation, counteragents are operative in the aban-

donment of all contaminants. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* (*MVB* 151 *T* 27.264c27ff.) proposes a twofold distinction between the counteragent of the path of vision and that of the path of cultivation.

90. See *MVB* 79 *T* 27.408b2ff., 105 *T* 27.545a18ff. For alternative theories of six varieties of cultivation, see ibid. 105 *T* 27.545a20ff., 163 *T* 27.824b2ff.; *SAHŚ* 10 *T* 28.954a7ff.; *AKB* 7.27 p. 410.18ff.; *SAKV* 640.2ff.; *NAS* 74 *T* 29.745b26ff. Yaśomitra (*SAKV* 640.11) glosses *vinirdhāvana* as "severing the possession of the defilement" (*vinirdhāvanaṃ kleśaprāptichedaḥ*).

91. See *AKB* 6.65b–d p. 381.19ff., including paths that are mundane (*laukika*), supermundane (*lokottara*), characterized by vision (*darśana*), characterized by cultivation (*bhāvanā*), beyond training (*aśaikṣa*), preparatory (*prayoga*), immediately successive (*ānantarya*), characterized by liberation (*vimukti*), and special (*viśeṣa*). Cf. also *ŚAŚ* 15 *T* 28.625a7ff., which refers to eleven different paths, containing from one to eleven members, and including all practices and virtuous factors instrumental in religious praxis.

92. *MVB* 51 *T* 27.267a7ff. Cf. ibid. 144 *T* 27.742b13ff.

93. Cf. Giyū Nishi "Indo Bukkyō shijō ni okeru kendōron no tenkai," in idem, *Abidatsuma Bukkyō no kenkyū*, (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975), 601ff., where six major differences between the paths of vision and cultivation are given.

94. *MVB* 51 *T* 27.265a7ff.

95. *ŚAŚ* 16 *T* 28.635c21ff.; *DS* 8 *T* 26.489b2ff.; *SR-SP* 112ff.; *SP* 7 *T* 26.395c8ff.; *AKB* 8.27c–d p. 451.8ff.; *SAKV* 684.29ff. (which quotes the sūtra source at length); *ADV* no. 586 p. 425.16ff.

96. *SR-SP* 53ff.; *SP* 2 *T* 26.372a25ff. See also Müller, ed., *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, p. 232.

97. *SP* 3 *T* 26.375b24–25. Cf. *Fa-chü ching* (**Udānavarga*) *T* 4 (210) 572a18–19; *Ch'u-yao ching* (**Udānavarga*) *T* 4 (212) 766b29–c1; *Fa-chi yao-sung ching* (**Udānavarga*) *T* 4 (213) 796c20ff. Cf. Franz Bernhard, ed., *Udānavarga*, 2 vols., Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden 10, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse 3–54 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 1:439 (ch. 32, v. 25): *nā 'sty aprajñasya vai dhyānaṃ prajñā nā 'dhyāyato 'sti ca. yasya dhyānaṃ tathā prajñā sa vai nirvāṇasāntike.*

98. See *MVB* 187 *T* 27.937b25ff. Since the intrinsic nature of mindfulness is insight, it therefore, like insight, has these three varieties. See ibid. *T* 27.938b8ff.

99. Ibid. 161 *T* 27.818a19ff.

100. The disagreements between Ghoṣavarman and Jīvala cited in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* bear a striking resemblance to those between Musīla and Nārada in the *SN* 12.68 *Kosambisutta* 2:115ff., and to the controversy concerning the necessity of meditation for religious attainment found in the *SN* 12.70 *Susimaparibbājakasutta* 2:119ff.; *SA* 14 no. 347 *T* 2.96b25ff. It is significant, however, that the views of Ghoṣavarman and Jīvala are not attributed to the sūtra. The Chinese translation of the *Kosambisutta* (*SA* 14 no. 351 *T* 2.98c1ff.) refers to a Musīla and a Nārada, and not to a Ghoṣavarman or a Jīvala. These two figures could have been cited in a sūtra that is not preserved, or they may simply serve as representatives in the Abhidharma traditions of a fundamental tension between knowledge and concentration, under whose names controversies of distinct historical origins have been conflated.

101. *MVB* 143 *T* 27.734b29ff.

102. Ibid. 60 *T* 27.310c6ff. Here the *Mahāvibhāṣā* counters the position of the

Vibhajyavādins, who claim that certain defilements can be abandoned simply due to the end of one's life in a particular rebirth state, quite apart from any state of concentration.

103. Ibid. *T* 27.310c28ff.; *AVB* 32 *T* 28.234b9ff. Cf. *MVB* 129 *T* 27.671b3ff.; *NAS* 78 *T* 29.765c5ff. This involves the issue of whether or not defilements are abandoned only in the seven basic meditative states (the four trance states of the realm of form and three among the four spheres within the formless realm), or also in the preliminary stages or thresholds *(sāmantaka)* for these basic meditative states. See *AKB* 6.49 p. 368.8ff., 8.22 p. 447.18ff.

104. *MVB* 90 *T* 27.465a15ff.

105. See ibid. 51 *T* 27.264b19ff., 144 *T* 27.741c20ff., where this view is attributed to the Abhidharma master Bhadanta. Cf. ibid. 90 *T* 27.465a15ff., 140 *T* 27.719c21ff. See also Jīvala's view cited above that the mundane path practiced by ordinary persons is not effective in abandoning defilements, ibid. 60 *T* 27.310c29ff.

106. See *MN* no. 26 *Pariyesanasutta* 1: 165; *MA* 56 no. 204 *T* 1.776c6ff.

107. See *MVB* 47 *T* 27.246c19ff., 68 *T* 27.355a15ff., 103 *T* 27.533a21ff., 144 *T* 27.742a2ff. For similar views attributed to Sthavira (or Śrīlāta), see *NAS* 62 *T* 29.686b27ff. For the views of the Mahāsāṅghikas, see Nishi, "Indo Bukkyō shijō ni okeru kendōron no tenkai," pp. 617ff.

108. *MVB* 62 *T* 27.321b7ff. lists eight senses, including abandonment, separation, termination, truth, complete understanding, the noble fruits of religious praxis, nirvāṇa with remainder, and nirvāṇa without remainder. Cf. ibid. 162 *T* 27.819b23ff., 181 *T* 910a17ff.

109. See *NAS* 55 *T* 29.651a6ff.

110. See ibid. 53 *T* 29.637c16ff. For an explanation of the activity of possession, see *MVB* 93 *T* 27.479a8ff., 157 *T* 27.796a26ff.; *AKB* 2.36b–d p. 62.15ff.; *SAKV* 143.8ff.; *NAS* 12 *T* 27.396c21ff.

111. For a detailed description, see *NAS* 55 *T* 29.651a17ff., quoted by Yaśomitra, *SAKV* 500.7ff. Cf. Hiromichi Katō, "Danwakuron no tokushitsu," *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 33/2 (1985): 471–476.

112. See *NAS* 55 *T* 29.651b3ff.; *SAKV* 500.19ff.

113. *MVB* 93 *T* 27.479c8ff. Cf. ibid. 157 *T* 27.796c28ff.

114. Ibid. 157 *T* 27.797a2ff. Cf. ibid. 155 *T* 27.788b19ff.

115. Ibid. 64 *T* 27.333c20ff.; *AKB* 6.28 p. 352.11ff.; *SAKV* 545.9ff.; *NAS* 63 *T* 29.689c12ff.

116. See *MVB* 158 *T* 27.803b2–3. For an extensive discussion of cessation resulting from consideration *(pratisaṃkhyānirodha)* and its relation to the possession of disconnection *(visaṃyogaprāpti)* and nirvāṇa, see ibid. 31 *T* 27.161a9ff., esp. 31 *T* 27.161a14–15, 31 *T* 27.161c11ff. Cf. ibid. 157 *T* 27.797b15ff., 158 *T* 27.803a5ff.

117. See ibid. 31 *T* 27.162a24ff. Cf. ibid. 158 *T* 27.802a18ff.

118. In the later Sarvāstivādin path-structure, the numerous paths are grouped under four types: (1) the path of preparation *(prayogamārga)*, consisting of the four preparatory stages of penetration consisting of heat and so on, practiced prior to entering the path of vision; (2) the immediately successive path *(ānantaryamārga)*, which removes obstacles and corresponds to the various stages of presentiment *(kṣānti)* in the path of vision, and to knowledge in the path of cultivation; (3) the path of liberation *(vimuktimārga)*, which corresponds to the various stages of knowledge (jñāna) in the paths of vision and cultivation; and (4) the special path *(viśeṣamārga)*, which is different from the preceding paths and corresponds to the path of cultivation through which one practices to attain

the four noble fruits of praxis. See *MVB* 166 *T* 27.344b8ff.; *AKB* 6.65b–d p. 381.21ff.; *SAKV* 597.32ff.; *NAS* 71 *T* 29.725c7ff. For the four varieties of counteragents *(pratipakṣa)* and their correlation with the various paths and stages in the Sarvāstivādin path-structure, see *MVB* 181 *T* 27.907c12–13; *SAHŚ* 10 *T* 28.953c24ff.; *AKB* 5.61a–c p. 320.7ff.; *SAKV* 499.4ff.; *NAS* 55 *T* 27.650c12ff. Cf. *MVB* 3 *T* 27.12c14ff., 141 *T* 27.725a11ff. for lists of five varieties of counteragents. Cf. ibid. 181 *T* 27.910a17ff., where different senses for the term "abandonment" are correlated with each of these four paths and four counteragents: namely, in this case, the immediately successive path produces abandonment as such, which is associated with the counteragent that results in abandonment; and the path of liberation produces separation, which is associated with the counteragent that results in maintenance. Both of these are declared to produce complete, as opposed to temporary, abandonment.

119. This first step of the immediately successive path is also referred to as the path of abandonment *(prahāṇamārga)*. See *MVB* 106 *T* 27.549c29ff.; *AKB* 4.87a–b p. 255.16.

120. See *AHŚ-D* 2 *T* 28 (1550) 819b18ff.; *SAHŚ* 5 *T* 28.913b2ff.; *MVB* 155 *T* 27.788b19ff.

121. The position that these two paths are strictly distinguished is attributed to certain groups within the Sarvāstivādin school: namely, the Westerners (*MVB* 90 *T* 27.465c8ff.) or the Outsiders (ibid. 108 *T* 27.557a18ff.).

122. Ibid. 60 *T* 27.312c10ff.

123. See *NAS* 68 *T* 29.716a1ff.

# The Path to Perdition: The Wholesome Roots and Their Eradication

Robert E. Buswell, Jr.

It has been typical in most scholarly treatments of Buddhist soteriology to focus on those points along the path where the religion proves its spiritual mettle, especially on those several stages of insight and cultivation at the upper reaches of the mārga where enlightenment is said to unfold. We find in this volume, for example, a number of chapters dealing with such rarified levels of achievement as the path of insight, the meaning of enlightenment, and the realization of buddhahood. This concern with factors crucial to consummating the mārga is entirely appropriate, of course, and such treatments tell us much about Buddhist contributions to soteriological discourse. I would like, however, to take a rather different tack toward Buddhist soteriology by exploring those factors that may prevent any further prospect for liberation. This focus on the other end of the path—where the beginning of the mārga recedes so far into the distance that it may seem to be lost forever—may help demonstrate what factors might render a person forever incapable of enlightenment in the Buddhist religious system. Perhaps just as important, it promises to reveal what soteriological factors are indispensable if a Buddhist is to retain any hope of setting out on the path, let alone completing that path and achieving enlightenment.

Buddhism most commonly portrays its religious discourse as being pervaded by "but one taste, the taste of liberation," as the Buddha states so eloquently in the famous simile of salt that we have used as the epigraph to our introduction to this volume.[1] This "taste of liberation" that Buddhism makes known to its followers was generally conceived to be accessible to all beings, provided they fulfill the preconditions necessary to its achievement. This Buddhist tendency toward universalism is perhaps best exemplified in the clarion call of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* that all beings have the capacity to achieve buddhahood, which I will examine later.

While espousing this ultimate goal of enlightenment for all, however, some Buddhist scriptures make the apparently conflicting claim that certain persons can be forever barred from salvation. Even more problematic, this claim is found even in universalist texts, such as the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. People who had engaged in the most heinous of evil actions were called "those whose wholesome roots are eradicated" (*samucchinna-kuśalamūla,* Ch. *tuan shan-ken* [*che*], Tib. *dge baḥi rtsa ba* [*kun tu*] *chad pa*). In the vast majority of cases, such persons were condemned to subsequent rebirth in hell. The different schools of Buddhist thought grappled with the problem of reconciling these two contradictory claims of the religion: on the one hand, a universalist dogma of liberation; on the other, the tenet that some beings could be abandoned, perhaps irrevocably, to hell. Examining the doctrine of *samucchinnakuśalamūla* will thus help answer a question fundamental to Buddhist soteriology: what could cause the prospect of salvation to become forever out of reach?

But the notions of wholesome roots and their eradication also provide important input in answering the converse question: what factor is absolutely essential if people are to retain their capacities for religious cultivation? With the plethora of qualities that Buddhists emphasize in their writings, it is difficult to determine which is most fundamental—which is the "lowest common denominator," as it were, of the Buddhist spiritual equation, the sine qua non of the path. It is on this issue that the treatment of *samucchinnakuśalamūla* looms large. Our examination of the wholesome roots will reveal their association with the concept of merit-making, or *puṇya,* and will take us down to the very bedrock of Buddhist soteriology. The essential catalyst to cultivation will prove to be, not one of the several important concepts of doctrine and praxis for which Buddhism is renowned, but the simple practice of charity or giving *(dāna),* a specific type of merit-making.

Some of the most detailed examinations of all these issues appear in the texts of the Indian Vaibhāṣika school of Abhidharma, virtually all of which are now available only in Chinese translation. My focus here will be on the treatments found in that school's massive compendium of Abhidharma doctrine, the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā* (Great Exegesis of Abhidharma; hereafter the *Vibhāṣā*). This treatise was compiled in northwest India around the second century C.E., but is now extant only in a Chinese translation made under the direction of Hsüan-tsang (d. 664) during the years 656 to 659.[2] The two hundred fascicles of this text are rich with material on virtually all the major doctrinal concepts and debates in early Indian Buddhism, and have been unconscionably neglected by most Western scholars of Buddhism (with the notable exception of Louis de La Vallée Poussin). I hope that by demonstrating the importance of the *Vibhāṣā*'s material in treating the concept of the *kuśalamūlas* and their eradication, others will be encouraged to make use

of this important text in their own work. I will supplement my treatment of the Vaibhāṣika sources with other Śrāvakayāna and Mahāyāna materials in Sanskrit, Pali, and Chinese, in order to clarify the broader outlook of the Buddhist tradition as a whole toward *samucchinnakuśalamūla.* I will also consider the relationship between *samucchinnakuśalamūla* and the better-known doctrine of the *icchantika,* a related term for the spiritually bereft used in the Mahāyāna traditions. This broad approach to the wholesome roots and their eradication should elucidate a surprisingly wide variety of issues in Buddhist soteriology as well as verify the seminal place ascribed to giving in Buddhist praxis.

## The Wholesome Roots

The wholesome "roots" or "faculties" *(kuśalamūla, shan-ken)* are considered by all schools of Buddhism to be fundamental to progress in religious praxis. Despite the central role that they play in Buddhist soteriology, they have been all but ignored in modern scholarship. Virtually the only mentions they have earned have appeared in discussions of related issues such as the doctrine of mental "seeds" *(bīja)* and spiritual lineage *(gotra).*[3]

The classification of the wholesome roots most familiar in Buddhism is a threefold one: nongreed *(alobha),* nonhatred *(adveśa,* P. *adosa),* and nonignorance *(amoha).*[4] These comprise nothing more than the converse of the three unwholesome roots *(akuśalamūla,* Ch. *pu-shan-ken),* which are even more pervasive in the literature. This same threefold arrangement is found in widely disparate strata of Abhidharma materials as well, including both the *Vibhaṅga* of the Theravādins and the *Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra.*[5]

We find in Vaibhāṣika texts, however, considerable development in the meaning of the *kuśalamūlas,* which is subsequently mirrored also in Mahāyāna materials. In place of the simple threefold listing, the Vaibhāṣikas have three separate typologies of *kuśalamūlas*—and it is this wider threefold typology that is generally meant whenever they refer to three *kuśalamūlas (san shan-ken).* The first class is the "wholesome roots associated with merit" *(puṇyabhāgīyakuśalamūla, shun fu-fen shan-ken),* which involve the seeds or *bījas (chung-tzu)* that produce rebirth in the realms of humans or luminaries (devas).[6] The qualities developed through this kind of wholesome root involve compounded *(saṃskṛta)* wholesome dharmas that are associated with the outflows *(sāsravakuśaladharma)*—viz., such qualities as faith, energy, shame and blame, and so forth. Second are the "wholesome roots associated with liberation" *(mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūla, shun chieh-t'o-fen shan-ken),* which involve the seeds of certain liberation *(*mokṣabīja, chüeh-t'o chung-tzu).*[7] It is this type of root that will eventually produce the attainment of *parinirvāṇa.*[8] The

*mokṣabhāgīyas* yield qualities that correspond to compounded wholesome dharmas that are free from outflows *(anāsravakuśaladharma),* i.e., the truth of the path *(mārgasatya),* or various factors conducive to liberation.[9]

Third are the "wholesome roots associated with spiritual penetration" *(nirvedhabhāgīyakuśalamūla, shun chüeh-tse-fen shan-ken),* which are the four aspects of the direct path of preparation *(prayogamārga, chia-hsing wei):* heat *(ūṣmāgata, nuan),* summit *(mūrdhan, ting),* acquiescence *(kṣānti, jen),* and highest worldly experience *(laukikāgradharma, shih ti-i fa).* The *nirvedhabhāgīyas* culminate in the entry onto the path of vision *(darśanamārga, chien-tao),* where the first stage of sanctity is achieved, and thus constitute the crucial points in the transformation of an ordinary person into a saint. Curiously, the *nirvedhabhāgīyas* are the only type of *kuśalamūla* that does not have a corresponding *bīja* associated with it. The only plausible explanation for this lack is that the *nirvedhabhāgīyas,* as the mārga's proximate stage of preparation, refer to the culmination of the gradual process of development represented by the remote stage of preparation—i.e., the first two classes of wholesome roots.[10] In an immediate flash of insight *(nirvedha),* there would be no need to posit a fundamental seed that sustains that development, as a gradual process of maturation would demand. The *nirvedhabhāgīyas* differ so dramatically from the two earlier types of *kuśalamūlas* that they are often referred to independently as the four *kuśalamūlas (ssu shan-ken)* in the Vaibhāṣika texts. Describing their special role in spiritual culture would require much more space than I have available in this chapter, so I shall defer their discussion for now.[11]

As for the first two types of *kuśalamūlas,* the Vibhāṣāśāstrins devote the great majority of their discussion to the *mokṣabhāgīyas.*[12] They note that the inherent characteristic *(svabhāva, tzu-hsing)* of the *mokṣabhāgīyas* are the actions done via body, speech, and mind, though mental actions predominate. That this type of *kuśalamūla* is under the control of the mental faculty *(manendriya)* is also confirmed by their statement that the *mokṣabhāgīyas* reside in the mind-ground (*manobhūmi*[*ka*]), not in the five categories of consciousness *(pañcavijñānakāya).* The *mokṣabhāgīyas* are matured through the kind of consistent cultivation the Vaibhāṣikas term "sustained application" *(prayogalābhika, chia-hsing teh)* and are perfected by the wisdom that derives from learning *(śrutamāyīprajñā)* and reflection *(cintamāyīprajñā).*[13] They can be planted by acts that are based on nongreed, nonhatred, and nondelusion, such as giving, keeping precepts, or learning the dharma; however, the number and type of wholesome actions necessary to ensure the implantation of this root vary and depend on the mentality *(āśaya, i-le)* of the individual. The Vibhāṣāśāstrins' treatment suggests that the *mokṣabhāgīyas* derive from the very same meritorious acts that defined the *puṇyabhāgīyas.* The only differ-

ence is that the *mokṣabhāgīyas* involve a more mature outlook on merit, the focus of concern having shifted from mundane heavenly rewards to attainment of the unconditioned realm of nirvāṇa.

Certain types of personalities are said to be most conducive to generating the *mokṣabhāgīyas*. As an exchange in the *Vibhāṣā* relates:

> Question: Who is certain to be able to plant the *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas?*
>
> Answer: If there is a person who is of the highest capacity *[*adhipatyāśaya, tseng-shang i-le],* who willingly seeks nirvāṇa and who turns his back on birth and death, then even with only a small amount of the wholesome [actions] of giving, keeping precepts, and hearing [the dharma], he is certain to be able to plant this *kuśalamūla*. However, if one is not such a person [repeated as above], then even with a large amount of such wholesome actions, one will still be unable to plant this *kuśalamūla.*[14]

A person can be sure that this wholesome root has been planted when certain signs appear:

> Question: The characteristics of the *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas* in the bodies of sentient beings are extremely subtle *(susūkṣma).*[15] How is it that one can know for sure whether these [wholesome roots] have already been planted?
>
> Answer: There are signs by which one can know. What are these signs? If, at the time that one hears a spiritual mentor speak the right dharma, one's body hairs horripilate and tears flow freely; if one turns away from saṃsāra and is joyfully intent on nirvāṇa; and if one has deep love and respect toward that dharma teacher, then one can know that it is certain that one has already planted the *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas*.
>
> There is a simile in connection with this. It is like a man who may have sown seeds in a field but, after a long interval of time, comes to doubt whether or not he actually sowed seeds in that field, and becomes befuddled and uncertain. Someone might come up to him and ask, "What's the point of being like this? You need now only sprinkle the field with water and cover it with fertilizer; then, if sprouts come up, you will know that [the field] has already been sown; if nothing comes up, then it hasn't." The man did as he was advised and then found out for sure. In the same way, if a cultivator is uncertain whether or not he has already planted the seeds of the *mokṣabhāgīyas* in himself, a spiritual mentor will tell him, "Go to a place where the dharma is being spoken. If, when you hear that dharma, your body hairs horripilate and tears flow freely . . . and

> if you have deep love and respect toward that dharma teacher, then you will know that you have already planted the seeds of liberation. If these things don't happen, then you haven't." Hence, from these signs one can know [whether the *mokṣabhāgīyabījas* have already been planted].[16]

Once the *mokṣabhāgīyas* have been planted, a minimum of three lifetimes must pass before a person can progress to planting the *nirvedhabhāgīyas,* thereby reaching the threshold of liberating insight *(darśanamārga).* During the first lifetime, the seeds associated with liberation *(*mokṣabhāgīyabīja),* which will produce the *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas,* are planted; during the second, this type of wholesome faculty is matured, so that one is able to plant the *nirvedhabhāgīyas;* and during the third, liberation (viz., *darśanamārga*) can occur. This agenda is, however, far from determined, and depending on a person's karmic makeup, an eternity of kalpas can be required before liberation is finally achieved.[17]

## Eradication of the Wholesome Roots in Non-Vaibhāṣika Sources

Most strata of Buddhist texts, from the earliest *Āgamas* onward, accept that there were beings whose *kuśalamūlas* might be eradicated, at least temporarily allaying, if not permanently subverting, their capacity for spiritual progress. The Theravāda school, for example, claimed that a person could become so utterly evil that he would be doomed to virtually eternal damnation. Support for this view was found in the *Puggalapaññatti* (Discourse on Human Types), probably the earliest of the six Theravāda Abhidharma texts: "Here a certain person is endowed with absolutely black *(ekantakāḷaka),* unwholesome dharmas. Thus that person, once drowned, is just drowned [viz., drowned forever]."[18] As Buddhaghosa interprets this passage,

> The term "absolutely black" means those grave wrong views [which deny the result of karman, such as] the theories of nonbeing *(natthikavāda),* noncausationism *(ahetukavāda),* and randomness *(akiriyavāda).*[19] A person like [the non-Buddhist fatalist] Makkhali Gosāla who holds those grave wrong views becomes the food of the fire of lower and lower hells. For such a person there is no emergence from worldly existence.[20]

Hence a person who had embraced such perverted views *(mithyādṛṣṭi)* no longer had any hope of attaining nirvāṇa. He had effectively become *aparinirvāṇagotraka* (divorced from the lineage of *parinirvāṇa*), close to the Mahāyāna definition of the *icchantika,* which I discuss later.

In its *Āgama* usage, the term *"samucchinnakuśalamūla"* commonly refers to wealthy householders *(gṛhapati)* who turn niggardly and refuse

to make offerings to śramaṇas and brahmaṇas, or eventually even to their own parents, family, and friends. The *Ekottarāgama* (Sequentially Numbered Collection), for example, says: "He became niggardly and greedy and did not have any intention to give. He feeds only off his previous merit and makes none anew."[21] Such an attitude invariably led to moral and material profligacy, the result of which was perdition, as shown in another story of a rich man *(śreṣthin)* also found in the *Ekottarāgama.*

King Prasenajit asked, "Is this *śreṣthi-gṛhapati* one whose wholesome roots are eradicated?"

The World Honored One replied, "So it is, oh king. As the king said, that householder is one whose wholesome roots are eradicated, for his past merit *(puṇya, fu)* is already exhausted and he has made none anew."

King Prasenajit asked, "Does that householder have any remaining merit?"

The World Honored One replied, "No, he does not, oh king, he hasn't the slightest bit remaining. It is like a farmer who only harvests and doesn't plant. Eventually, he will become poor and destitute and slowly his life will come to an end. And why is this? [Because] he merely fed on his past merit and didn't make any anew. This evening, [upon his death], this householder will be living in the Hell of Tears and Lamentations (Mahāraurava-niraka)."[22]

*Samucchinnakuśalamūla* seems not to have been regarded as an inviolable state in the *Āgamas,* however, and the Buddha specifically allowed provisions that would free one who had become *samucchinnakuśalamūla* from being condemned to hell. In one sūtra in the *Ekottarāgama,* the Buddha observes a wealthy householder named *Vilāsin (P'i-lo-hsien), who was also ignoring his charitable duties. Hearing him cavorting with his female musicians, the Buddha predicted,

"Ānanda. After seven days this elder's life will come to an end and he will be born into the Hell of Tears and Lamentations. And why is this? This is the fixed dharma: at the time that the lifespan of a person whose wholesome roots are eradicated comes to an end, he will be born into the Hell of Tears and Lamentation. This householder's previous merit is now exhausted and he has made none anew."

Ānanda addressed the Buddha, "Isn't there some means whereby this *śreṣthin* need not have his lifespan come to an end after seven days?"

> The Buddha replied to Ānanda, "There is no way that he can keep his life from coming to an end. The [meritorious] practices that he developed in the past have today been exhausted. His [fate] is sealed."[23]

Significantly, although it was fixed that the life of this *samucchinnakuśalamūla* must come to an end, the Buddha does provide one dispensation: he can avoid rebirth in hell provided he shave his head, take up the three robes of the monk, go forth into homelessness, and cultivate the mārga. In this case *Vilāsin, after delaying his ordination for six days, finally went forth on the seventh and final day of his life. While cultivating the ten recollections of the Buddha, dharma, saṃgha, and so forth, he was reborn among the Four Heavenly Kings (Caturmahārājikadeva). The Buddha foretells that, after that rebirth, he will continue up through the heavens to the Paranirmittavarśavartin gods (lit., "those who control enjoyments conjured by others"), whence he will return back down through the heavens, arriving once again at the realm of the Four Heavenly Kings. From there, he will be reborn one last time among humans and achieve an end to suffering. But ultimately his success in avoiding hell was "because he had faith in the Tathāgata."[24]

The premise that the *samuucchinnakuśalamūla* need not be destined to eternal damnation is also broached in passages in the *Nikāyas* and *Āgamas* where the Buddha refuses to address the various indeterminate *(avyākṛta)* questions.[25] As Vasubandhu noted in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* the Buddha's silence on the question of whether or not the universe is eternal, for example, has direct bearing on the problem of *samucchinnakuśalamūla.* If the Buddha had answered that the world is both eternal and noneternal, this would have implied that some beings are congenitally destined for liberation while others can legitimately be condemned to saṃsāra for an eternity. "If both [extremes] are accepted as valid, [then] for certain people, parinirvāṇa would be possible, [but] not for others."[26] Hence the Buddha's positivistic attitude toward language reflected the soteriological underpinnings of his teachings. By refusing to respond to these indeterminate questions, the Buddha denied that any type of being is to be regarded as eternally *samucchinnakuśalamūla.*

## Eradication of the Wholesome Roots in the Vaibhāṣika School

Occasional references to *samucchinnakuśalamūla* are found in later neo-Vaibhāṣika compendia such as *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, Abhidharmanyāyānusāra,* and *Abhidharmadīpa,* but no concerted effort is made in any of those treatises to define the term precisely or to spell out the process by which a person becomes condemned to such a fate.[27] We are, however, fortunate to find scattered throughout that seminal Vaibhāṣika handbook of

doctrine, the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā,* several detailed descriptions of *samucchinnakuśalamūla* that allow us to elucidate several of its ramifications. These include such crucial issues as the process by which eradication of the wholesome roots occurs and the means by which recovery from that state can be effected. The treatment of *samucchinnakuśalamūla* in the *Vibhāṣā* also illustrates the penchant of its authors, the Vibhāṣāśāstrins, to expand on the number of dissociated forces *(cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra)* found in the static dharma lists of later Sarvāstivādin handbooks; this discussion will therefore have important implications as well for our view of the development of the Vaibhāṣika doctrinal system.

Unlike proponents of several other contemporary schools of Buddhist thought, the Vaibhāṣikas refused to accept an eternal state of *samucchinnakuśalamūla.* According to the Vibhāṣāśāstrins, once the Buddhist adept had planted the *puṇyabhāgīya-* and *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas,* their resiliency was almost astounding, especially considering the power of evil *(akuśala)* to subjugate all activities within the desire realm *(kāmāvacara).*[28] Persons who had planted the *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas* were destined eventually to perfect them: even though they might first perform many types of unwholesome actions and end up in hell, ultimately their seeds of liberation *(*mokṣabīja, chieh-t'o chung-tzu)* would find an opportunity to sprout and they would achieve perfection as śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, or buddhas. The Vibhāṣāśāstrins give a simile to show this resiliency of the wholesome roots:

> This can be compared to a person who was traveling and carrying two vessels: one made of metal, one made of clay. He tripped and fell, breaking both of his vessels. At that time, that person did not begrudge the loss of his metal vessel, but he did begrudge the loss of his clay vessel, and lamented over this. Another person came by and asked him what had happened, and the man told him the whole story. This person then told the traveler, "When you do not even begrudge the loss of your metal vessel, how instead can you begrudge the loss of this clay vessel?" And he said again to him, "You certainly are ignorant. Why do I say this? When a metal vessel is broken, even though it has lost the form of the vessel, it has not lost the substance of the vessel. If you take [that broken vessel] back to a metalworker, he can make it as good as new, or even better than new. But when a clay vessel is broken, both the shape and the substance are lost: although one returns it to a potter, he cannot even reuse the materials, let alone restore the original vessel!"[29]

The implication drawn elsewhere by the Vibhāṣāśāstrins is that *samucchinna* can refer only to the immediate present moment; it is devoid of any ontological intimations whatsoever:

> According to the explanations appearing in the *Prajñaptibhāṣya, kuśala* cannot continue in the present life *(dṛṣṭadharma)* [for the person who is *samucchinnakuśalamūla*]. It is fixed *(niyata/avaśyam, chüeh-ting)* that *kuśala* can regenerate only at the time of either birth or death in hell. As that *Bhāṣya*

> says, "If a person destroys an ant's egg and does not feel even the slightest remorse, it should be said that that person has eradicated the *kuśala* of the three realms of existence. For him, the *kuśalamūlas* cannot continue in the present life. It is fixed that *kuśala* can regenerate only at the time of either birth or death in hell."[30]

This view that the *kuśalamūlas* can regenerate only after one's requisite destiny has been fulfilled is adumbrated above in the passages from the *Ekottarāgama,* which state that while the *samucchinnakuśalamūla* must die, he is not thereby barred from ever attaining *parinirvāṇa.* There the Vibhāṣāśāstrins insist that although rebirth in hell must take place, living out that existence will allow *kuśala* to revive.

This mitigation of the punishment due the *samucchinnakuśalamūla* is further indicated by a number of passages in the *Vibhāṣā* where such a person compares favorably even to arhats. Although they may be purified now, arhats had many flaws in the past and are tainted in the present by their desire to cultivate merit *(puṇya, fu).* "For this reason, this makes us revile them now. Who can consider them capable of rendering benefit to others?" The *samucchinnakuśalamūla,* in contrast—because of his humble status at the bottom of the spiritual heap—has nowhere to go but up, and is therefore ultimately capable of developing merit anew. In addition, he may have cultivated much merit in previous lives, so that "now [after the end of his present rebirth in hell] he would be capable of gaining birth in an aristocratic family, of having handsome features that everyone would admire, eloquence in speech that everyone would respect, and wisdom and learning that everyone would honor. For these reasons, we should consider him [rather than the arhat] capable of rendering benefit to others."[31] In a passage even more damning, the arhat is doomed to return to the defiled ways of action he presumed he had overcome forever, while the *samucchinnakuśalamūla* is not:

> The *samucchinnakuśalamūla* perforce is endowed with wholesomeness *(kuśalasamanvāgata);* the dispassionate [gods in the form and formless realms] perforce are endowed with unwholesomeness *(akuśalasamanvāgata)* [because of their attachment to the pleasures of meditative isolation]. All those who need no further training [i.e., the arhats] perforce are endowed with taints *(rāgyasamanvāgata).*[32]

The Mahāsāṅghikas are well known to have had a low opinion of the arhats,[33] and the Sarvāstivādins held some views that tarnished, however slightly, their pristine image.[34] But this praise of the *samucchinnakuśalamūla* over the arhat raises serious questions about the adequacy of the śrāvaka ideal and seems incongruous in a Śrāvakayāna text. One cannot help thinking that the Mahāyāna attitude toward the arhat is adumbrated here: since the arhats are fixed at one of the six arhat

stages, they are in an ultimate sense inferior to the *samucchinnakuśala-mūla,* who at least has the potential to go forward and possibly progress all the way to buddhahood.

What creates *samucchinnakuśalamūla,* this most dangerous of all soteriological obstacles? Various interpretations concerning the fundamental quality *(svabhāva)* of *samucchinakuśalamūla* are noted by the Vibhāṣā-śāstrins. These cover the gamut of unwholesome dharmas, from lack of faith *(aśraddhā)* to wrong views *(mithyādṛṣṭi)* to being swayed by the defilements *(kleśasaṃyoga).* All dharmas *(sarvadharmāḥ)* are even called the *svabhāva* of *samucchinakuśalamūla,* because all dharmas are said to follow those *kuśalamūlas* to perdition.[35] As implied in the passages marshalled above, however, the judgment of the Vibhāṣāśāstrins is that

> the fundamental quality *(svabhāva)* of all *samucchinnakuśalamūlas* is lack of inherence *(asamanvāgama, pu-ch'eng-chiu).* It is included in the category of nonobstructing, neutral, dissociated forces *(anivṛtāvyākṛta-cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra-skandha)* and is one among the remaining [and unspecified] dharmas of similar type *(evañjātīyakadharma)* among the dissociated [forces].[36]

Eradication *(samucchinna)* for the Vaibhāṣikas therefore means only the temporary allayment of *kuśala,* not a permanent state of perdition.

Since *samucchinna* is not the permanent excision of the *kuśalamūlas* from a person's mental continuum, what does it in fact mean for the Vaibhāṣikas? Clearly, the Vibhāṣāśāstrins intend for *samucchinna* to refer only to the temporary allayment *(asamanvāgama)*[37] of the *kuśalamūlas* due to the overriding force of perverted views *(mithyādṛṣṭi):*

> Question: What is the meaning of *samucchinnakuśalamūla?*
> Answer: [Cutting off the wholesome roots].is not to be taken in the worldly sense of an axe cutting down a tree, etc., because *mithyādṛṣṭi* and *kuśala* cannot be in mutual contact *(saṃspṛṣṭa, hsiang-ch'u).*[38] Rather, at the time that *mithyādṛṣṭi* appears within the mental continuum *(santati, hsiang-hsü),* it results in the annihilation of any endowment with the wholesome faculties *(kuśalamūlasamanvāgama-vināṣa)* and brings about their nonendowment. Then what is meant by "eradication" *(samucchinna)?* If in an individual continuum there is no acquisition of the wholesome faculties *(kuśalamūlāprāpti),* then at that time it is said that the *kuśalamūlas* are already eradicated. . . . Moreover, at the time that *kuśala* is eradicated, wholesome dharmas are all abandoned *(parihāṇa, she)* and one gains the nonendowment *(asamanvāgamatā, pu-ch'eng-chiu hsing)* of all wholesome dharmas.[39]

This claim that perverted views bring an end to the wholesome roots is accepted only with debate in the *Vibhāṣā,* even though the weight of

the Vaibhāṣika tradition is clearly behind that interpretation. Still, this passage clarifies the position of the Vibhāṣāśāstrins toward eradication. The Vibhāṣāśāstrins distinguish two principal stages in bringing an end to the wholesome roots. First, a peculiar kind of immaterial "force dissociated from mind" *(cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra)* interrupts the presence of the wholesome roots *(kuśalamūlāprāpti)* in the mental continuum of the person.[40] Second, an especially virulent type of unwholesome dharma, such as *mithyādṛṣṭi* or the most severe form of evil action *(akuśalakarman),* serves as the actual agent of excision *(upaghāta).* Because perverted views and wholesome dharmas cannot be in mutual contact, *mithyādṛṣṭi* itself cannot function as that agent. As the Vibhāṣāśāstrins consistently propose for equally complex transitional states, a totally dissociated causal force—a *cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*—could best account for such a radical change in an individual mental continuum. This new dharma was given the technical designation *samucchinnakuśalamūla-cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra.* Hence, although *mithyādṛṣṭi* should be considered the actual agent of excision, its ability to perform this function is dependent on the presence of this accompanying *cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra.*

There would seem to have been no overriding need for the Vibhāṣāśāstrins to have posited the completely distinct dharma of *samucchinnakuśalamūla-cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra* to cover this eventuality. Because this dissociated force was defined as *asamanvāgama* (nonendowment), it could just have easily been considered the *aprāpti* (nonobtainment) of the *kuśalamūlas,* in the same way that the Vibhāṣāśāstrins interpret *pṛthagjanatva* (ordinariness) to be the nonobtainment of *arhattva* (sanctity). Hence the number of *viprayuktasaṃskāras* found in the *Vibhāṣā* could have been drastically limited.[41] Indeed, the fact that this and many other of the *viprayuktasaṃskāras* mentioned in the *Vibhāṣā* are not found in such neo-Vaibhāṣika works as the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* suggests that such a simplification of the Vaibhāṣika system had taken place by the time those texts were composed, sometime during the fourth century C.E. Nevertheless, the difficult soteriological questions raised by *samucchinnakuśalamūla* could be resolved—indeed, almost sidestepped entirely—by resorting to a peculiar kind of force, a *cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra,* that would prompt the temporary allayment of *kuśala.*

## *Samucchinnakuśalamūla* and Its Relationship to the *Icchantika* Doctrine

Much more well known in Buddhist literature than *samucchinnakuśalamūla* is the related term *"icchantika,"* which is also used to refer to a person who is unable to attain nirvāṇa. Although *icchantika* is unknown to the Pali *Nikāyas* or the Chinese *Āgamas,* Mahāyāna texts employ both it and the synonymous *samucchinnakuśalamūla,* which should help to clarify

their respective denotations. A close examination of the evolution of the conception of *samucchinnakuśalamūla* in Mahāyāna materials will also provide some insight into the contradictory views on the *icchantika* found in different strata of Mahāyāna literature.

The derivation of "*icchantika*" is obscure. It is generally presumed to be some variation on the present participle "*icchant*" (desiring),[42] a view supported by the translations of the term in Chinese and Tibetan. In addition to Chinese transcriptions, which render the term as *i-ch'an-t'i* or the abbreviated *ch'an-t'i,* the Chinese also translated it as *(ta-)shen-yü,* "greatly hedonistic (or dissipated)," a rendering suggestive of the Tibetan equivalent *hdod chen (po),* "subject to great desire." As we have seen in the *Ekottarāgama* story of the householder *Vilāsin, *samucchinnakuśalamūla* also involved such excessive forms of sensual desire, immediately suggesting the close connections between the two terms. Against this traditional interpretation, Wogihara Unrai derives *icchantika* from *itthaṃtvika* or *aitthaṃtvika* (worldly, or belonging to the world).[43] Although Wogihara's derivation has not been generally accepted, his view finds some substantiation in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*'s definition of the *icchantikas* as "those who cling to the worldly life *(bhavābhilāsin).*"[44]

One of the simplest Mahāyāna treatments of the *icchantika,* which recalls a number of Śrāvakayāna interpretations of *samucchinnakuśalamūla,* appears in the *Yang-chüeh-mo-lo ching* (*Aṅgulimālīyasūtra;* trans. ca. 435–443, by Guṇabhadra), a text closely associated with the Tathāgatagarbha tradition.[45] In this scripture, *icchantikas* belong to the spiritual lineage *(gotra)* of the "perverse determined" *(hsieh-ting),* while tathāgatas, bodhisattvas, and two-vehicle adherents (pratyekabuddhas and śrāvakas) are of "salutary determined" *(cheng-ting) gotra.* This distinction parallels the account in the Theravāda *Puggalapaññatti* that those of determined destiny include both the five types of hell-goers and people holding wrong views as well as the eight classes of saints.[46] The *icchantikas* are also said to be the most vile of beings, and to engage in all the ten evil types of conduct in the same way that the bodhisattvas perfect all ten pāramitās. For this reason, the *icchantikas* are born among the hungry ghosts, whose desires are equally intense. This is one of the few instances where the destinies of *icchantikas* or *samucchinnakuśalamūlas* are said to be other than the hells.[47]

It is Asaṅga in his *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (Compendium of Abhidharma) who first clarifies the close relationship between the concepts of *samucchinnakuśalamūla* and *icchantika:*

> He whose wholesome roots are eradicated may be considered as either endowed *(samanvāgama)* or not endowed *(asamanvāgama)* with the endowment *(samanvāgama)* with the seeds *(bīja)* of wholesome dharmas. As far as its extreme is concerned, [the *samucchinnakuśalamūla*] who is endowed with

> defilements *(saṃkleśa)* is to be classed among the *icchantikas* who lack the dharma of *parinirvāṇa.*[48]

In this interpretation, the *icchantika*'s complete segregation from all other living beings could not be clearer: "The extreme of those [*icchantikas*] is one who is not endowed with the cause [that leads to mokṣa], because he lacks the cause of mokṣa [and is thus indefinitely barred from gaining nirvāṇa]."[49]

Asaṅga's treatment here suggests that there are two types of *samucchinnakuśalamūlas:* one who is still endowed with the seeds of the wholesome dharmas and thus still has the potential to regenerate the *kuśalamūlas,* and another who is not. In extreme cases, the latter type no longer retains the capacity to achieve *parinirvāṇa* and is thus the true *icchantika,* who is presumably barred forever from enlightenment (though Asaṅga never states this explicitly). Because the former type continues to be endowed with the seeds of wholesome dharmas, he remains capable of regenerating the *kuśalamūlas,* and therefore may ultimately redeem himself. Hence, in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya,* the term *"icchantika"* refers to the extreme form of the most severe variety of *samucchinnakuśalamūla*—the one who is no longer endowed with the seeds of wholesome dharmas.[50]

Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* also includes a brief discussion of the *icchantika*'s status within the *gotra* scheme. There, *icchantikas* once again are divided into two types.

> In this [verse no. iii.11], the sense is that those who are destitute of the *parinirvāṇa*-dharma are not part of the *gotra* [scheme]. In brief, they are of two types: those who are momentarily lacking the *parinirvāṇa*-dharma and those who are indefinitely so lacking. Those who are momentarily lacking the parinirvāṇa-dharma are of four types: [1] he whose evil conduct is absolute; [2] he who is *samucchinnakuśalamūla;* [3] he who lacks the *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas;* [4] he of inferior *ku śalamūlas* whose provisions are incomplete. But if they are indefinitely destitute of the *parinirvāṇa*-dharma, then they are deficient in its cause, for they lack the *parinirvāṇa-gotra.*[51]

This passage helps clarify a number of issues in the Yogācāra interpretation of *icchantika* and *samucchinnakuśalamūla.* First of all, the *samucchinnakuśalamūla* is only one of the subclasses of the less severe of the two types of *icchantikas.* Because the *samucchinnakuśalamūla* is distinguished from those who lack the *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas,* it appears that *samucchinnakuśalamūla* was used to refer exclusively to those whose *puṇyabhāgīyakuśalamūlas* were eradicated. In addition, as we saw above with the *Abhidharmasamuccaya,* only those beings who are indefinitely (i.e., eternally) *aparinirvāṇagotraka* are the true *icchantikas;* they presumably correlate with the above-mentioned type, who no longer possess the seeds of wholesome dharmas. Although Asaṅga hedged on stating the ultimate

fate of this latter type in his *Abhidharmasamuccaya,* in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* he is more explicit, stating that the segregation of such *icchantikas* from *parinirvāṇa* will be indefinite *(atyanta).*

This distinction between two major types of *icchantikas* also resonates with their treatment in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra,* which defines the *icchantika* in the following terms:

> He does not believe in the law of causality, he has no feeling of shame, he has no faith in the workings of karma, he is unconcerned with the present or the future, he never befriends good people, he does not follow the teaching of the Buddha.[52]

This definition is remarkably similar to one given previously by the Vibhāṣāśāstrins, in which *mithyādṛṣṭi* was regarded as the agent of eradication. There is some contradiction, however, in this sūtra's attitude toward the *icchantikas;* earlier portions state that they are utterly incapable of attaining nirvāṇa, whereas later sections allow that they still possess the innate buddha-nature *(buddhadhātu, fo-hsing)* and thus have not lost irrevocably all capacity for enlightenment.[53] Although this subsequent softening of views might be due to textual interpolations, the final result does leave us with two types of *icchantikas,* again close to Asaṅga's position on the problem. Yet the major difficulty with the notion of the *icchantika* in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*—a difficulty that consistently plagued the traditional Buddhist commentators—is that it contradicts the sūtra's fundamental message of the innate presence of buddha-nature in all sentient beings. As Takasaki Jikidō has noted, "The final solution of this problem seems to be the denial of the existence of such people from the ultimate point of view through introducing the idea of the Bodhisattva's compassion or the idea of the long time needed before their achieving Buddhahood."[54]

Furthermore, the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* accepts two different subclasses among the *icchantikas:* those who are *icchantikas* "because they have abandoned all the wholesome roots" *(sarvakuśalamūlotsargata),* and those who are so "because they cherish certain vows for all beings since beginningless time" *(sattvānādikālapraṇidhānata).*[55] The former are defined as those

> who have abandoned the bodhisattva collection [of the canonical texts], making the false accusation that they are not in conformity with the sūtras, the codes of morality, and emancipation. By this they have forsaken all the stock of merit *(kuśalamūla)* and will not enter into nirvāṇa.[56]

Here the Mahāyānists give an explicitly sectarian interpretation of the *icchantika,* redefining him as an antagonist of their own doctrine. This view that an *icchantika* has enmity toward the Mahāyāna teachings is also found in other Mahāyāna texts, such as the *Ratnagotravibhāga,*

where this antagonism is called the "obstruction of the *icchantikas,* and its antidote *(pratipakṣa)* is to cultivate conviction in the Mahāyāna teachings *(Mahāyānadharmādhimuktibhāvanā).*"[57]

This first type of *icchantika,* who has fallen into that state because of his conflict with Mahāyāna, can eventually attain nirvāṇa according to the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra,* in that he "might some day be influenced by the power of the tathāgatas and be induced at any moment to foster the stock of merit. Why? Because, Mahāmati, no beings are left aside by the tathāgatas."[58] However, the second type of *icchantika* found in the *Laṅkāvatāra* has voluntarily renounced forever all the wholesome roots because of the vow he took at the initiation of his spiritual quest:

> "So long as they [all beings] do not attain nirvāṇa, I will not attain it myself." . . . Knowing that all things are in nirvāṇa itself from the very beginning, the Bodhisattva-*icchantika* would never enter nirvāṇa.[59]

The bodhisattva-*icchantika* par excellence was Kṣitigarbha, who voluntarily assumed that state in order to save those sentient beings condemned to hell. In this sense, Kṣitigarbha was superior even to Amitābha who, according to the thirtieth of his forty-eight vows, was able to guarantee that devas, humans, and even insects could be reborn into his buddha land without having to pass through any of the three evil bournes.[60] But use of the adverb "even" in this phrase could be construed to imply that insects are the lowest species that can be saved through Amitābha's intercession; it is not stated that his grace extends as far as the denizens of hell, or specifically to the *samucchinnakuśalamūlas* who no longer retain the capacity to achieve nirvāṇa.

Despite the special dispensations given to *samucchinnakuśalamūlas* or *icchantikas* in both Śrāvakayāna and Mahāyāna literature, which sometimes frees them from irredeemable damnation, such freedom was, of course, not invariably guaranteed. As we saw with the Vaibhāṣikas, the regeneration of the *kuśalamūlas* takes place because of the *samucchinnakuśalamūla*'s continued endowment *(samanvāgama)* with the wholesome dharmas. However, because *samanvāgama* is also considered to be a dissociated force *(cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra)* in the *Mahāvibhāṣā,* that dharma is always present in the conditioned realm but need not come into operation until the proper conditions are present. Hence, in the Vaibhāṣika interpretation, only after the *samucchinnakuśalamūla-cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra* has vanished from a person's mental continuum can he again be endowed with wholesome dharmas, thereby allowing him to rise from his ignoble state.

The Vaibhāṣikas were not the only Buddhist school that accepted the possibility that the *kuśalamūlas* could be regenerated. Such a position was much more urgent, in fact, for the proponents of tathāgatagarbha doctrine. Their acceptance of the presence of an innate germ of buddhahood in all beings meant that they had to circumvent any eternal con-

demnation of the *icchantikas* to hell. In the *Ratnagotravibhāga,* this problem was resolved by interpreting statements such as that found in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* that "*icchantikas* belong to the lineage of those for whom *parinirvāṇa* is un[attainable] *(aparinirvāṇagotraka)*" as being of purely conventional validity, intended simply to point out that the *icchantikas* would remain in their ignoble state until they were able to overcome their antipathy toward the Mahāyāna:

> And also the saying: "the Icchantikas are by all means of the nature of no Perfect nirvāṇa" is taught in order to remove the hatred against the Doctrine of the Great Vehicle, this being the cause of their being Icchantikas and refers to a certain period of time. Indeed, as there exists the Germ *(garbha)* which is pure by nature, none could be of the absolutely impure nature. Therefore, . . . all living beings, with no difference, have the possibility of being purified.[61]

Perhaps the only recourse available to the Mahāyānists in attempting to reconcile such diametrically opposed doctrines as tathāgatagarbha and *icchantika* was this appeal to the skillful means *(upāya)* and compassion *(karuṇā)* of the Buddha.

## Giving as the Basis of the Path

This treatment of the *kuśalamūlas* and their eradication has shown that the Buddhists presumed there was a close relationship between the *kuśalamūlas* and merit *(puṇya)*—and specifically, the meritorious practice of giving *(dāna)*. This conclusion can be drawn from the passages in the *Ekottarāgama* cited above about the rich householder becoming *samuchinnakuśalamūla* through his niggardliness. As is well known, the instruction on charity *(dānakathā)* was the first third of the graduated discourse that the Buddha commonly used in instructing laypeople; it is even more fundamental than the succeeding discourses on morality *(śīlakathā)* or the temporal joys of the heavens *(svargakathā)*.[62] This placement of *dāna* at the inception of his teaching suggests that the Buddha considered it to be the foundation of lay practice, presumably because of its value in weaning the layperson from interest in material acquisitions, one of the coarsest types of attachments. "Giving," as the *Ta-sheng i-cheng* (Entries on the Meaning of Mahāyāna) states, "produces the power of radical nonattachment, in which one gives constantly without resting."[63] The nonattachment engendered through giving would lead in turn to specific temporal and spiritual benefits in this life, including wealth[64] and long life,[65] as well as better rebirths in the future.[66] But giving also played an integral part in the practice leading to liberating wisdom for the Śrāvakayānists,[67] an innovation that would be of tremendous importance in the subsequent development of Buddhism.

The correlation drawn in Śrāvakayāna materials between *puṇya* and

the *kuśalamūlas* is also suggested in the evolution of both terms in Indian Mahāyāna texts. This evolution can be gleaned from an examination of the various Chinese translations of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, the earliest Mahāyāna text, which Lewis Lancaster has studied in considerable detail. Lancaster's comparison of different Chinese translations of that scripture shows that where the word *"puṇya" (kung-teh)* is found in earlier renderings of this sūtra, *"kuśalamūla" (shan-ken)* appears in the later. Specifically, in passages translated before 382 C.E. the former is used, whereas after 408 we find the latter.[68] Hence the concept of the *kuśalamūlas* apparently evolved out of a practice that emphasized merit-making, and did not come to be used as a distinct term until around the beginning of the fifth century.

This relationship between *puṇya* and the *kuśalamūlas* may also explain why there was no extension of the meaning of *kuśalamūla* among the Theravādins, such as we find among the Vaibhāṣikas and the Mahāyānists. The Theravādins were perhaps reticent to consider supererogatory acts like charity to be *kuśalamūlas* in their own right, because such acts were considered to stem from the more fundamental faculty of "nongreed" *(alobha-kuśalamūla)*. The presence of the underlying nongreed was the factor that allowed a person to undertake merit-making activities in the first place. Hence, *alobha* rather than *dāna* deserved to be regarded as the *kuśalamūla* proper.

*Dāna* is considered to be the first of the six (alt. ten) pāramitās in Mahāyāna and later Śrāvakayāna literature, presumably also because of its role in overcoming material cravings.[69] In Mahāyāna materials, the specific soteriological effect engendered by giving was considered to be mental control. The *Fo-shuo Hai-i p'u-sa so-wen ching-in fa-men ching* (The Buddha Speaks the Dharma Instruction Concerning Hai-i Bodhisattva's Question Regarding the Seal of Purity) tells us, for example,

> To control well the mind is the meaning of giving. . . .
> The control brought about through giving,
> Causes the inner recesses of the mind to become extremely firm.[70]

Such control would in turn produce that deep mental repose which is samādhi, leading eventually to bodhisattvahood, achievement of the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment and other important stages in praxis, the certitude of enlightenment, the ten *bhūmis*, and, eventually, all the physical and psychical powers of buddhahood.

Thus perfection of giving leads to the perfection of all the pāramitās, and finally even of *anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi* (complete, perfect enlightenment).[71] The symbiotic relationship between the different pāramitās ensured that perfection of any one would lead to the perfection of all:

> Out of any one pāramitā issue forth innumerable pāramitās. Each and every pāramitā [is interconnected], like Indra's net. If you just know the

original emptiness of the one mind, then naturally the myriad practices will be complete.[72]

It is in Chinese materials that this focus on giving is taken to its inevitable conclusion: giving alone is said to be sufficient to bring about liberation, while the other pāramitās actually inhibit such progress. The San-chieh-chiao (Three Stages Teaching) sect of Chinese "popular" Buddhism, which was proscribed during the reign of Wu Chao (684–704) for its radical beliefs, taught a system of praxis that focused almost exclusively on "universal giving" *(p'u-shih)*. As the *Hsiang-fa chüeh-i ching* (Book of Resolving Doubts during the Semblance Dharma Age), a Chinese apocryphal scripture affiliated with the sect, states:

All the buddhas of the ten directions also attained buddhahood through the practice of giving. This is why I [the Buddha] have stated at several places in the sūtras that the six pāramitās are all headed by giving.[73]

Monks actually delude themselves if they neglect charity and emphasize instead the cloistered activities of meditation and study. Indeed, the devaluation in monastic practice of the role played by giving could even lead monks to perdition:

"Why should a renunciant give alms? He has only to cultivate the practices of dhyāna meditation and wisdom. What is the use of these hurly-burly, futile affairs?" Those who produce such thoughts belong to the retinue of Māra and at the end of their lives will fall into the great hell, where they will pass through progressive torments.[74]

And again:

Although bhikṣus cultivate the [other] five pāramitās for kalpas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, if they don't practice giving, they will be unable to attain the other shore of nirvāṇa.[75]

Another seminal text of the San-chieh chiao, the *Tui-ken ch'i-hsing fa* (The Teaching on Generating Practice that Accords with Capacity), explicitly notes that such practices as patience, dhyāna, and compassion are all variations on giving. Even the Buddhist soteriological goal of liberation itself is redefined as the breaking down of the traditional hierarchical relationship between the laity and the monks, a difference in status that earlier interpretations of giving sustained. This overarching role given to a practice identified since the inception of institutional Buddhism with the laity could therefore lead also to the breakdown of the barriers between lay and ordained practice.[76]

This reductionist view toward praxis, in which the whole range of Buddhist soteriological techniques is reduced to giving, suggests that for many Buddhists the concept of *dāna* was the very lifeblood of their religion, playing an even more crucial role than meditation and wisdom. A similar reductionism is seen in statements by the famous Ch'an master Ta-chu Hui-hai (d.u.; fl. ca. ninth century), who noted that all six

pāramitās are contained in *dānapāramitā,* because if one cultivates an attitude of selflessness through charity, all the other pāramitās will automatically be perfected.[77] The soteriological value ascribed to giving in Chinese Buddhist materials attests to the continued importance of the concept in widely separate strata of Buddhist literature.

Based on the evidence presented here, the evolution of the original three *kuśalamūlas* (of nongreed, nonhatred, and nondelusion) into a concept that embraced both the *puṇyabhāgīya-* and *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas* occurred through the transformation of the conception of *puṇya,* and more specifically of *dāna.* Once that extension of *dāna*'s significance was made, it was easy to expand the range of the *kuśalamūlas* even further, so as to involve them in virtually all stages of spiritual development. Thus, as we saw in the Vaibhāṣika system, the *kuśalamūlas* come to be extended beyond their basis in such preliminary practices as *puṇya,* until, as *nirvedhabhāgīyas,* the stage leading into *darśanamārga,* they become the critical point of the mārga.

This progression from *dāna* to the *darśanamārga* is brought out well in a striking passage of the *Mahāsāṅghikavinaya.* There it is explained that giving produces a joyful mind, which leads to the purity of samādhi. Through that purity the constant production and cessation of the five skandhas are seen, which creates a disgust for sensual experiences, eventually leading to *vajrasamādhi* or "adamantine absorption," the initiation into sanctity.[78] The preceptory *Yu-p'o-sai chieh ching* (**Upāsakaśīlasūtra;* Sūtra on the Lay Precepts) even states that *vajrasamādhi* allows one to give equally to all and thus obtain infinite merit.[79] Thus this sūtra not only connects giving to the apex of Buddhist meditative development but also shows its limitless efficacy in religious praxis. Hence giving comes to be considered the catalyst for the full range of Buddhist soteriological experiences.

We may thus conclude from this examination of the *kuśalamūlas* that the quality most fundamental to the mārga is *dāna.* As long as people have a modicum of the detachment that is a byproduct of charitable aspirations—and thus the potential to develop the radical detachment that is a necessary precondition to enlightenment—they have the capacity to achieve salvation. But should that aspiration be lost, their wholesome roots would be eradicated and their destiny would be an indeterminate, and perhaps infinite, period of perdition.

## Notes

1. *Seyyathāpi bhikkhave mahāsamuddo ekaraso loṇaraso, evam eva kho bhikkhave ayaṃ dhammavinayo ekaraso vimuttiraso. Cullavagga* ix.14. All references in Pali are to the Pali Text Society editions.

2. *A-p'i-ta-mo ta p'i-p'o-sha lun (Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā;* hereafter *AMV), T*

1545, vol. 27, pp. 1a–1004a; hereafter cited only by fascicle, page, and line number. I also refer occasionally to two alternate recensions of the text, *A-p'i-t'an p'i-p'o-sha lun* (*T* 1546) and *Pi-p'o-sha lun* (*T* 1547).

3. For example, the *kuśalamūlas* have been treated tangentially in Padmanabh S. Jaini, "The Sautrāntika Theory of *Bīja*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 22 (1959): 236–249. See also the coverage in David Seyfort Ruegg, *La Théorie du tathāgatagarbha et du gotra: Étude sur la sotériologie et la gnoséologie du bouddhisme*, Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, vol. 76 (Paris, 1969), cf. p. 80 n. 3, 458ff., 460 and n. 1, 462–463, 477, 478, 482, 493. There has yet to be any study of the role of the *kuśalamūlas* themselves and their place in Buddhist soteriology, such as I attempt in this chapter.

4. For selected translations of a number of the most important passages in Pali literature describing these three *kuśalamūlas*, see Nyanaponika Thera, trans., "The Roots of Good and Evil: Buddhist Texts," *The Wheel*, nos. 251–253 (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1978), 10–104. In the *Visuddhimagga*'s discussion of "root" in the term "*kuśalamūla*," those things which achieve stability or skillfulness (*kuśala*) through that root are said to be "firm, like trees, and stable; but those without root-cause are like moss [with roots no bigger than] sesamum seeds, etc., [and are thus] unstable" (*Visuddhimagga* xvii.70; Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification* [*Visuddhimagga*] *by Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa* [Colombo: A. Semage, 1964], 612). See also *Atthasālinī* iii.293; noted in Herbert V. Guenther, *Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma* (1957; rpt. ed., Berkeley, Calif.: Shambhala, 1976), 79.

5. See *Vibhaṅga*, pp. 169, 210ff.; *She-li-fu a-p'i-t'an lun (Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra)* 6, *T* 28.570a27–572c15. The *Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* is generally attributed to either the Vātsiputrīyas or their Saṃmitīya subsect, though different theories have been proposed about the text's origins; see the summary of the various positions in Watanabe Baiyū, "*Sharihotsu-abidatsumaron* kaidai" (An Analysis of the *Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra*), *Kokuyaku issaikyō*, Abidon-bu 19 (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1934), 8–11.

6. The benefits accruing from planting the *puṇyabhāgīyakuśalamūlas* are discussed in detail at *AMV* 31, p. 159b and ibid. 82, p. 426a.

7. Sanskrit reconstructions marked by an asterisk are my own tentative equivalencies, which are not attested in the *Abhidharmakośa* (Prahlad Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* of *Vasubandhu*, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, vol. 8 [1967; rpt. ed., Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975]; hereafter *AK*), the only Sarvāstivāda text for which both Chinese and Sanskrit recensions are extant. Based on Hsüan-tsang's noted consistency in rendering Sanskrit technical terms, however, I believe most of these reconstructions to be reasonably accurate.

8. Cf. discussion in Jaini, "*Bīja*," p. 248, where he speculates that *mokṣabhāgīyakuśala* corresponds to *anāsravakuśalabīja* in the Sautrāntika system. This hypothesis is borne out in this passage from *AMV*, though I have found no explicit statement in *AMV* positing this correspondence. This definition shows that when the *icchantika* is called *aparinirvāṇagotraka* in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and Yogācāra texts, he is *samucchinna* from this type of *kuśalamūla*.

9. See *AK* i.4 and the commentary by Yaśomitra, *Sphuṭārthāvyākhyā*, in Swami Dwarikadas Sastri, ed., *Abhidharmakośa and Bhāṣya of Ācārya Vasubandhu with Sphuṭārtha Commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra* (Varanasi: Bauddha Bhāratī, 1981), 1:16.

10. See Guenther, *Abhidharma*, p. 215, for the use of the terms "remote" and "direct" in relation to the *prayogamārga*.

11. The *nirvedhabhāgīyas* are treated in *AK* vi.17ff.; and see Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), s.v. *"nirvedhabhāgīya,"* and Louis de La Vallée Poussin, trans., *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu, Mélanges chinois et bouddhique* 16 (1971), 4:169. For these faculties as four aspects of the *prayogamārga,* see Guenther, *Abhidharma,* pp. 215, 220–221. The Pali antecedent appears at *Visuddhimagga* iii.22, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification,* p. 89. The most detailed treatment of the *nirvedhabhāgīyas* appears in Leon Hurvitz, "The Abhidharma on the 'Four Aids to Penetration,' " in Leslie Kawamura, ed., *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilization,* Herbert Guenther Festschrift (Emeryville, Calif.: Dharma Publishing, 1977), 59–104.

12. The following material is taken from *AMV* 7, p. 35a7–35b18.

13. This type of *kuśalamūla* is said to be perfected by *śrutamāyī* and *cintamāyī prajñās* because it is associated with the desire realm *(kāmāvacarapratisaṃyukta);* other teachers, however, have advocated that it is also perfected via *bhāvanāmāyīprajñā,* which would extend its range of applicability into the material and immaterial realms as well. According to *A-p'i-t'an p'i-p'o-sha lun (Abhidharmavibhāṣā)* 6, *T* 28.40b17–19, cultivation wisdom is activated only on the material and immaterial realms, not on the desire realm; the only type of wisdom that operates in all three realms of existence is congenital wisdom *(upapattipratilābhikaprajñā).* Hence even in the highest stage of dhyāna (where the *nirvedhabhāgīyakuśalamūlas* would already have come to the forefront?), the *mokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlas* would retain some sort of applicability.

14. *AMV* 7, p. 35b4–8.

15. Cf. Yaśomitra's commentary to *AK* i.1 (Dwarikadas Sastri, ed., *Sphuṭārtha,* 1:7): *mokṣabījam aham hy asya susūkṣmam upalakṣaye/ dhātupāṣāṇavivare nilīnam iva kāñcanam* ("I see his extremely subtle seed of salvation like a seam of gold hidden in metal-bearing rock"); translated in Jaini, *"Bīja,"* p. 248.

16. *AMV* 176, p. 886a5–19.

17. Ibid. 7, p. 35b8–16; and cf. Guenther, *Abhidharma,* p. 215. The Jainas also have a similar doctrine in which three lifetimes are required for the attainment of *kevalajñāna.* Even in Chinese Hua-yen theory a three-lifetime theory was proposed, in which the first life was one of learning, the second one of reflection and cultivation, and the third the stage of fruition; see Fa-tsang, *Hua-yen i-sheng chiao-i fen-ch'i chang* 2, *T* 45.489c4–15, noted in Robert E. Buswell, Jr., *The Korean Approach to Zen: The Collected Works of Chinul* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 93 n. 211.

18. *Idh'ekacco puggalo samanvāgato hoti ekantakāḷakehi akusalehi dhammehi, evaṃ puggalo sakiṃ nimuggo nimuggo va hoti. Puggalapaññatti,* 7.1, translation adapted from Bimala Churn Law, *Designation of Human Types (Puggala-Paññatti)* (1924; rpt. ed., London: Pali Text Society, 1969), 99; this passage is noted in Jaini, *"Bīja,"* p. 246 n. 2, and discussed on pp. 246–247; see also Ruegg, *Tathāgatagarbha,* p. 479.

19. The theory of nonbeing *(natthikavāda)* is attributed in Pali materials to Ajita Kesakambali, noncausationism *(ahetukavāda)* to Makkhali Gosāla, and randomness *(akiriyavāda)* to Pūraṇa Kassapa. See the discussion in David J. Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975), 40.

20. *Puggalapaññatti Aṭṭhakathā* 7.1, translated in Jaini, *"Bīja,"* p. 246.

21. *Tseng-i a-han ching (Ekottarāgama)* 34, *T* 2.739b.14–15; this particular sūtra in the collection has no Pali equivalent. Preserved only in Chinese translation, the *Ekottarāgama* is generally considered to be a Dharmaguptaka recension,

though some scholars, notably Akanuma Chizen, have proposed affiliations with the Mahāsāṅghika school or its Prajñaptivāda offshoot. See A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism* (rev. 2nd ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 7–9.

22. *Tseng-i a-han ching* 13, *T* 2.612c, corresponding to the Pali *Saṃyuttanikāya* 3.2.10 "Aputtaka." For Mahāraurava-niraka, a hot hell, see Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary,* s.v. *"mahāraurava-niraka"*; William Montgomery McGovern, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1923), 62.

23. *Tseng-i a-han ching* 34, *T* 2.739b19–25.

24. Ibid., *T* 2.740a17.

25. For discussion of the unanswered questions, and scriptural citations to them, see K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963), 243; lists of ten and fourteen such questions are common.

26. Pradhan, ed., *Kośa,* p. 471.2–3; translated in Theodore Stcherbatsky, *The Soul Theory of the Buddhists* (1920; rpt. ed., Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 1976), 44.

27. Generally, only passing remarks are made about this sort of individual when discussing the endowment *(samanvāgama; ch'eng-chiu)* with certain faculties *(indriya),* dharmas, and so forth. See, for example, the discussion of *samucchinnakuśalamūla* with reference to the *indriyas* at Pradhan, ed., *Kośa,* p. 50.19.

28. Cf. *AMV* 3, p. 14b8–9, and *AMV* 20, p. 102b10–11.

29. *AMV* 176, pp. 885c18–886a3.

30. *AMV* 35, p. 184a2–7. This passage continues with a long description of which type of person can reestablish the *kuśalamūlas* at birth and which at death in hell. *AMV* 112, p. 966c7–8 states specifically that the fruition of *samucchinnakuśalamūla* is experienced in the great hell beneath Jambudvīpa. Cf. also *AMV* 14, p. 67a7–8 and 125, p. 653c, which both clarify the Vaibhāṣika view that a being must be in hell before the *kuśalamūlas* can regenerate. I have been unable to trace the quotation from the *Prajñaptibhāṣya* (*Shih-she lun; T* 26.514a–529c). This text was not translated into Chinese until sometime between 1018 and 1058, during the Northern Sung dynasty, four centuries after Hsüan-tsang's time; thus it is virtually impossible that the extant text would represent the recension that Hsüan-tsang consulted in preparing this translation.

31. *AMV* 82, p. 422a22–b4.

32. *AMV* 158, p. 801a21–22.

33. See Jiryo Masuda, "Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist Schools: A Translation of the Hsüan-chwang Version of Vasumitra's Treatise *I-pu tsung-lun lun,*" *Asia Major* 2 (1925), p. 24, proposition no. 28.

34. Cf. ibid., pp. 42–49, propositions nos. 8, 9, 23, 24, 32, 34.

35. Cf. *mūrdhapatita* (fall from the summit), one of the *nirvedhabhāgīyas,* where operation of the *adhipatipratyaya* causes all dharmas to follow along; *AMV* 6, p. 27c.9–10. For the relationship between *samucchinnakusalamula* and *mūrdhapatita,* see *AMV* 6, p. 30b16–c16.

36. The different propositions about the *svabhāva* of the *samucchinnakuśalamūla* are given at *AMV* 35, p. 182b26–c4. The Vibhāṣāśāstrins' judgment is given at p. 182b4–6; *asamanvāgama* as the *svabhāva* of *samucchinnakusalamula* is noted also in *A-p'i-t'an pa chien-tu lun (Jñānaprasthāna)* 3, *T* 26.783c8.

37. *Samanvāgama* is consistently translated by Hsüan-tsang as "accomplishment" *(ch'eng-chiu);* Edgerton *(Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary,* s.v., *"samanvāgata")* gives the equivalents "endowed," "provided," "attended." It seems to have been the early Vaibhāṣika equivalent for their later theory of *prāpti* (posses-

sion); cf. the discussion in *AKB* iv.80b, where *samanvāgama* is equated with *prāpti;* noted in Jaini, ed., *Abhidharmadīpa,* p. 167 n. 1; and see the discussion in idem, *"Bīja,"* p. 245 about the synonymity of *samanvāgama* and *prāpti.* Apparently, *samanvāgama* was a sūtra term assimilated by the Vaibhāṣikas and eventually transformed into the full-blown theory of *prāpti.* See also *AKB* ii.36 (Pradhan, ed., *Kośa,* pp. 62–63), and Saṃghabhadra's *A-pi-t'a-mo-tsang hsien-tsung lun (Abhidharmakośakārikāvibhāṣya)* 6, *T* 29.803cff. For the role of *prāpti* in the Vaibhāṣika doctrinal system, see Collett Cox, "Controversies in Dharma Theory: Sectarian Dialogue on the Nature of Enduring Reality" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1983), 37–59.

38. Cf. the parallel discussion on the possibility of the coexistence of avidyā and prajñā in Padmanabh S. Jaini, *"Prajñā* and *Dṛṣṭi* in the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma," in Lewis R. Lancaster, ed., *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems,* Berkeley Buddhist Series, vol. 1 (Berkeley: Institute of South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1977), 403–415.

39. *AMV* 35, p. 182b22–26 and 45, p. 233a18. Several Vaibhāṣika texts make the claim that *mithyādṛṣṭi* is the agent of eradication; see ibid. 7, p. 30b19; ibid. 146, p. 748b29; and cf. *A-p'i-t'an p'i-p'o-sha lun* 25, *T* 28.187b22–188a8; *AK* iv.79a and La Vallée Poussin, *L'Abhidharmakośa,* 4:170. There is a detailed discussion on this point in Saṃghabhūti's 383 C.E. translation of the *Pi-p'o-sha lun (Mahāvibhāṣā)* 2, *T* 28.423b18–424a7. The Vibhāṣāśāstrins clarify that both *sāsrava-* and *anāsravapratyaya-mithyādṛṣṭi* can cause *samucchinnakuśalamūla* in their treatment of the question at *AMV* 35, p. 183b12–20. Cf. also Saṃghabhadra's comments in *Shun cheng-li lun (Nyāyānusāra)* 12, *T* 29.397b.

This sense that *mithyādṛṣṭi* is the agent of eradication also occurs later in the *Abhidharmadīpa.* As Jaini has noted, the Vaibhāṣikas there posit three different grades of both *mithyādṛṣṭi* and the *kuśalamūlas,* each of which is further subdivided into three still finer divisions. The extreme *(adhimātra)* grade of *mithyādṛṣṭi* destroys the developed *prāyogika-kuśalamūlas* pertaining to the desire realm. However, the extremely grave *(adhimātra-adhimātra)* grade of *mithyādṛṣṭi,* such as *nāstikavāda, ahetukavāda,* or *akriyāvāda,* destroys the most subtle variety of the *kuśalamūlas*—the congenital *(upapattilābhika) kuśalamūlas* of the desire realm—thus rendering the person *samucchinnakuśalamūla.* See Jaini, ed., *Abhidharmadīpa,* p. 165.1–2: *tayā punar mithyādṛṣṭyā prakarṣaprāptayā navaprakārayā navaprakārāṇi kuśalamūlāni samucchidyante.* Quoted also in Ruegg, *Tathāgatagarbha,* 478. See, too, the discussion in Jaini, *"Bīja,"* p. 247.

40. The *cittaviprayuktasaṃskāras* are various anomalous forces that are emblematic of the Vaibhāṣika taxonomy of dharmas. They were considered to be neither mental, material, nor uncompounded, and therefore could not be readily subsumed within other dharma classifications. They include such qualities as origination, subsistence, decay, and extinction; possession; life force; and various linguistic and semantic forces. For a description of this category of dharmas, see Padmanabh S. Jaini, "Origin and Development of the Theory of *Viprayukta-saṃskaras,*" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 22 (1959): 531–547; and Collett Cox, "Controversies in Dharma Theory," passim. See also the following note.

41. Among the *cittaviprayuktasaṃskāras* unknown in the *Kośa* but mentioned in *AMV* are *arhattvaparihāṇa* (regression from sainthood), *mūrdhapatita* (falling from the stage of summit), and *saṃghabheda* (causing schism in the order). I have discussed these in an unpublished paper, "The Proliferation of Forces Dissociated from Mind *(Cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra)* in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣā,*" delivered at the American Oriental Society, 197th Annual Meeting, 25 March 1987, University of California, Los Angeles.

42. See Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary,* s.v., "*icchantika.*"

43. Cited in Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (1930; rpt. ed., Boulder. Colo.: Prajñā Press, 1981), 219n.

44. Takasaki Jikidō, trans., *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra): Being a Treatise on the Tathāgatagabha Theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism,* Serie Orientale Roma 33 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966), 202.

45. Aṅgulimālīya (He Who Has a Necklace of Fingers) waylaid travelers and cut off their fingers, which he strung into a necklace. He was made the subject of the *Yang-chüeh-mo-lo ching* (*T* 2.512b–544b) to illustrate that even this most evil of men still maintained the innate capacity for enlightenment through possessing the tathāgatagarbha. The text has been treated by Takasaki Jikidō in his *Nyoraizō shisō no keisei* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1974), 191–233. Takasaki dates it to sometime before the middle of the fourth century (ibid., p. 220).

46. *Puggalapaññatti* i.15, 16.

47. *Yang-chüeh-mo-lo ching* 2, *T* 2.529c.

48. Pralhad Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharma-Samuccaya of Asaṅga,* Visva-Bharati Studies 12 (Santiniketan: Visva-Bharati, 1950), p. 35; cf. Walpola Rahula, trans., *Le Compendium de la super-doctrine (philosophie): (Abhidharmasamuccaya) d'Asaṅga,* Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient (Paris, 1971), 78:58.

49. Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharma-Samuccaya,* p. 35; Rahula, *Compendium,* p. 58.

50. See Jaini, "*Bīja,*" p. 246, for the parallel Sautrāntika denial that the *sūkṣmakuśaladharmabīja* can ever be lost, since they are innate *(upapattilābhika).*

51. *aparinirvāṇadharmaka etasminn agotrastho 'abhipretaḥ. sa ca samāsato dvividhaḥ. tatkālāparinirvāṇadharmā atyantam ca. tatkālāparinirvāṇadharmā caturvidhaḥ. duścaritaikāntikaḥ, samucchinnakuśalamūlaḥ, amokṣabhāgīyakuśalamūlaḥ, hīnakuśalamūlaś ca aparipūrṇasaṃbhāraḥ. atyantāparinirvāṇadharmā tu hetuhīno yasya parinirvāṇagotram eva nāsti.* Sylvain Lévi, ed., *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra,* Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, no. 159 (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1907), 12–13; idem, trans., *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra,* Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, no. 190 (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1911), 30.

52. *Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching (Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra), T* 12.365a–603c; translated in Suzuki, *Studies,* p. 219n. A long description of what makes one an *icchantika,* as well as of the connection between *samucchinnakuśalamūla* and *icchantika,* appears in *Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching* 3, *T* 12.562b3ff.

53. *Icchantikas* are referred to as *aparinirvāṇagotraka* in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra;* see Takasaki, trans., *Ratnagotravibhāga,* Introduction, p. 39, translated at p. 224 n. 182.

54. Takasaki, trans., *Ratnagotravibhāga,* Introduction, p. 40.

55. Bunyu Nanjo [sic], ed., *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (Kyoto: Ōtani University, 1923), 66; Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, trans., *The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (1932; rpt. ed., Boulder, Colo.: Prajñā Press, 1978), 58; idem, *Studies,* pp. 217–221.

56. Nanjo, ed., *Laṅkāvatāra,* p. 66; Suzuki, trans., *Laṅkāvatāra,* p. 59.

57. Takasaki, trans., *Ratnagotravibhāga,* p. 205.

58. Nanjo, ed., *Laṅkāvatāra,* p. 66; Suzuki, trans., *Laṅkāvatāra,* p. 59.

59. Nanjo, ed., *Laṅkāvatāra,* p. 66; Suzuki, trans., *Laṅkāvatāra,* p. 59; quoted at idem, *Studies,* p. 220.

60. *Ta A-mi-t'o ching (Sukhāvatīvyūhasūtra), T* 12.329c4–8.

61. Takasaki, trans., *Ratnagotravibhāga,* p. 224. The quoted passage is taken from the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra,* but Takasaki gives no page reference. "A certain period of time" is interpreted to mean that they remain *icchantikas* only until such time as they overcome their antipathy toward Mahāyāna.

62. For this progressive discourse, see *Dīghanikāya* i.110.2, i.148.7, cited, with discussion, in Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (1932; rpt. ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), 169. For the role of *dāna* in procuring rebirth in heaven for the laity, see Fujita Kōtatsu, "Genshi bukkyō ni okeru seiten shisō" (The Ideology of Heavenly Rebirth in Early Buddhism), *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 19-2 (1971): 412. For the importance of giving in Indian culture in general, see Vijay Nath, *Dāna: Gift System in Ancient India, A Socio-economic Perspective* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1987).

63. *Ta-sheng i chang* 14, *T* 44.755a20–21; note also: "If one gives, then the mind is without any defiling attachment" *(Lu-shan Lien-tsung pao-chien* 6, *T* 47.333a9–10).

64. "Because giving has no covetousness, one then gains tremendous wealth. Through that giving, one then guards the precepts and then becomes a lord among gods and humans." (*Fang-kuang po-jo ching* 17, *T* 8.120b22–23).

65. "[When the human lifespan was two thousand years], that person was utterly without covetousness and practiced giving. His lifespan was then extended to five thousand years" (*Chüan-lun-sheng wang hsiu-hsing ching,* in *Ch'ang a-han ching* 6, *T* 1.41c6–7).

66. The *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* specifies that giving produces rebirths in such superior castes as those of *kṣatriya* warriors and brahman priests (*Ta po-jo po-lo-mi-to ching* 3, *T* 5.14a8–b11). "If one gives, keeps precepts, and cultivates diligently, one can leave behind the defilement of sexual desire and gain rebirth in the pure heavens" (*P'i-p'o-shih fo ching* 2, *T* 1.157a4–5). "One who gives to the śramaṇas and brahmacārins will be reborn in the future in the heavens and gain long life and pleasant rewards" (*Chung a-han ching* [*Madhyamāgama*] 6, *T* 1.456c25–26).

67. "Respectfully keeping the required precepts, cultivating wide learning, and perfecting the practice of giving, one will gain wisdom" (*Chung a-han ching* 26, *T* 1.605c19–20, 24–25).

68. In the different recensions of this text in Chinese translation, where Lokakṣema (*T* 224, translating in 179 C.E.), Chih Ch'ien (*T* 225; trans. ca. 223–253 C.E.), and Chu Fo-nien/Dharmapriya (*T* 226; trans. in 382 C.E.) use *puṇya,* Kumārajīva (*T* 227, trans. in 408) uses *kuśalamūla.* See Lewis R. Lancaster, "An Analysis of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-Sūtra* from the Chinese Translations" (Ph.D diss., University of Wisconsin, 1968), 58–62; a chart of references to the term *"kuśalamūla"* appears at pp. 68–76. For an outline of the place of this scripture in accounts of the evolution of Mahāyāna doctrine, see idem, "The Oldest Mahāyāna Sūtra: Its Significance for the Study of Buddhist Development," *Eastern Buddhist* 8-1 (May 1975): 30–41.

69. Giving as a pāramitā is discussed at Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine,* pp. 172–193; and for the evolution of the pāramitās, see ibid., pp. 165–269.

70. *Fo-shuo Hai-i p'u-sa so-wen ching-in fa-men ching* 4, *T* 13.482a15–26; *chüan* 12, p. 505ba21.

71. See passages in *Ta po-jo po-lo-mi-to ching* 3, *T* 5.14a8–b11, and for virtually identical passages, see *chüan* 402, *T* 7.9a–b, *Mo-ho po-jo po-lo-mi ching* 1, *T* 8.220a. *Fang-kuang po-jo ching* 17, *T* 8.120b23–27.

72. *Lu-shan Lien-tsung pao-chien* 6, *T* 47.333a12–14.

73. *Hsiang-fa chüeh-i ching, T* 85.1336b20–22. For a complete translation and extensive study of this important Chinese apocryphon, see Kyoko Tokuno, "A Case Study of Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha: The *Hsiang-fa Chüeh-i Ching*" (M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1983). This section of the text

is translated by Tokuno at p. 83. See also Mark E. Lewis, "The Suppression of the Three Stages Sect: Apocrypha as a Political Issue," in Robert E. Buswell, Jr., ed., *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 207–238; and Jamie Hubbard, "The Inexhaustible Storehouse" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1986). The definitive study of the San-chieh chiao sect is Yabuki Keiki's *Sangaikyō no kenkyū* (Studies in the Three Stages Sect) (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1927).

74. *Hsiang-fa chüeh-i ching, T* 85.1336b12–15; translation adapted from Kyoko Tokuno, "The *Hsiang-Fa Chüeh-I Ching,*" p. 82. For her discussion of the peculiar interpretation of giving in this indigenous Chinese sūtra, see ibid., pp. 57–64.

75. *Hsiang-fa chüeh-i ching, T* 85.1336b20–24.

76. See *Tui-ken ch'i-hsing fa,* in Yabuki Keiki, *Sangaikyō no kenkyū, betsu hen,* pp. 121.13–124.9; the significance of this passage is discussed in Lewis, "Three Stages Sect," pp. 32–34.

77. *Tun-wu ju-tao yao-men lun, ZZ* 2, 15, 5, 422c/*HTC,* vol. 110.422b.

78. *Mo-ho-seng-ch'i lü (Mahāsāṅghikavinaya)* 21, *T* 22.397b8ff.

79. *Yu-p'o-sai chieh ching (*Upāsakaśīlasūtra), T* 24.1065a13–14.

## Glossary

ai-hsing che 愛行者
*A-p'i-ta-mo chü-she lun* 阿毘達磨俱舍論
*A-p'i-ta-mo ta p'i-p'o-sha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論
*A-p'i-t'a-mo-tsang hsien-tsung lun* 阿毘達磨藏顯宗論
*A-p'i-t'an pa chien-tu lun* 阿毘曇八犍度論
*A-p'i-t'an p'i-p'o-sha lun* 阿毘曇毘婆沙論
ch'an-t'i 闡提
ch'eng-chiu 成就
cheng-ting 正定
chia-hsing shan-ken 加行善根
chia-hsing teh 加行得
chia-hsing wei 加行位
chieh-t'o chung-tzu 解脱種子
chien-hsing che 見行者
chien-tao 見道
chih-hsing 志性
chüan-yüan 轉遠
chüeh-ting 決定
chüeh-t'o chung-tzu 解脱種子
chung-tzu 種子
fo-hsing 佛性
*Fo-shuo Hai-i p'u-sa so-wen ching-in fa-men* 佛説海意菩薩所問淨印法門
fu 福
hsiang-ch'u 相觸
*Hsiang-fa chüeh-i ching* 像法決疑經
hsiang-hsü 相續
hsieh-ting 邪定
Hsüan-tsang 玄奘
i-ch'an-t'i 一闡提
i-le 意樂
jen 忍
ken-pen 根本
kung-teh 功德
meng-li 猛利
*Mo-ho-seng-ch'i lü* 摩訶僧祇律
nuan 煖
P'i-lo-hsien 毘羅先
*Pi-p'o-sha lun* 鞞婆沙論
pu-ch'eng-chiu 不成就
pu-ch'eng-chiu hsing 不成就性
pu-shan-ken 不善根
p'u-shih 普施
San-chieh-chiao 三階教
san shan-ken 三善根
shan-ken 善根
she 捨
sheng-teh 生得
sheng-teh shan-ken 生得善根
shen-yü 深欲
*Shih-she lun* 施設論
shih ti-i fa 世第一法
*Shun cheng-li lun* 順正理論
shun chieh-t'o-fen shan-ken 順解脱分善根

shun chüeh-tse-fen shan-ken 順決擇分善根
shun fu-fen shan-ken 順福分善根
ssu shan-ken 四善根
*Ta A-mi-t'o ching* 大阿彌陀經
Ta-chu Hui-hai 大珠慧海
*Ta-pan-nieh-p'an ching* 大般涅槃經
*Ta-sheng i chang* 大乘義章
ta-shen-yü 大深欲
teng-ch'i 等起
ting 頂
tseng 增
*Tseng-i a-han ching* 增一阿含經
tseng-shang i-le 增上意樂
tuan shan-ken [che] 斷善根者
*Tui-ken ch'i-hsing fa* 對根起行法
*Tun-wu ju-tao yao-men lun* 頓悟入道要門論
tzu-hsing 自性
*Yang-chüeh-mo-lo ching* 央掘魔羅經
yin-yüan 因緣
*Yü-ch'ieh-shih ti lun* 瑜伽師地論
*Yu-p'o-sai chieh ching* 優婆塞戒經

# On the Ignorance of the Arhat

PADMANABH S. JAINI

In the opening verse of his *Abhidharmakośa,* Vasubandhu (ca. 400), while commenting on the words *yaḥ sarvathā sarvahatāndhakāraḥ,* which describe the omniscience of the Buddha, speaks of two kinds of ignorance.[1] The first is called *kliṣṭasammoha* (defiled delusion), which means ignorance of the four noble truths. The pratyekabuddhas (those who attain arhatship without the aid of a buddha) and the śrāvakas (those disciples of the Buddha who attain arhatship) are free from such ignorance, since they have realized the true nature of all *(sarvaṃ)* that exists as being *duḥkha* (suffering), *anitya* (impermanent), and anātma (nonself). However, Vasubandhu claims that they have not overcome the second kind of ignorance, *akliṣṭa-ajñāna,* the "undefiled," ordinary ignorance of the infinite varieties of objects that are distant in space and time. Vasubandhu states in passing that the Buddha has achieved this total freedom from ignorance *(ajñāna)* through cultivating its counterpart, but fails to indicate what that counteragent *(pratipakṣa)* could be.[2]

Yaśomitra (ca. 700), in his commentary to the *Kośa,* the *Sphuṭārthāvyākhyā,* states that *pratipakṣa* means *āryamārga* (the noble path), since it is the opposite of the adversary called *kleśa* (defilement). Yaśomitra does not seem happy with this explanation, because the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas have destroyed the *kleśas* and yet have not overcome all forms of *ajñāna.* He therefore gives an alternative meaning, saying that *pratipakṣa* is *anāsravaṃ jñānam,* knowledge freed from *āsravas* (influxes).[3] Whether this *anāsravajñāna* is merely the understanding achieved by the destruction of the *anuśaya* (disposition or defilement) known as avidyā (ignorance,) or whether it entails some additional achievement, is not explained by Yaśomitra. He is also silent on the precise difference between the *kleśapratipakṣa* and the *ajñānapratipakṣa,* and about the possible stage on the path (mārga) at which the latter may be

cultivated. Yet there must be some distinction, since the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* is defined as a deficiency that the arhats failed to overcome even when they were presumed to have followed the same noble path traversed by the Buddha, which was believed to culminate in the same kind of nirvāṇa. Neither Vasubandhu nor Yaśomitra addresses this issue specifically, but an investigation of the Vaibhāṣika rules on the mārga pertaining to the destruction of the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* may yield a solution.

Yaśomitra is acutely aware of the anomaly of admitting in the arhat a form of ignorance that remains even in the absence of *kleśas:*

> Surely, [a questioner asks,] all that is considered *sāsrava* [affected by influxes] is destroyed by both the *śrāvakas* and the pratyekabuddhas as in the case of the Buddha; so how could you maintain that in their case only the *kliṣṭasammoha* is destroyed? Has it not been said in the sūtra: "I do not say that there is the complete destruction of suffering as long as even a single dharma remains without being known *(aparijñāya)* and abandoned *(aprahāya)*?" Therefore it must be admitted that this *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* was abandoned by the arhats and the pratyekabuddhas as well, analogous to their destruction of eye *(cakṣu)* and other dharmas [i.e., the ten material elements] by the method of overcoming delight *(chandarāga)* toward them. Otherwise there would be no total destruction of suffering in their case?[4]

Yaśomitra accepts this sūtra and concedes that, even in the case of the arhats and pratyekabuddhas, this so-called *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* must be considered destroyed *(prahīṇam)* like the *kliṣṭasammoha,* but nevertheless pleads that there is a difference: whereas the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna,* unlike the *kliṣṭasammoha,* can be destroyed, it is liable to reappear *(samudācarati)* and needs to be dispelled anew on each subsequent occasion. In the case of the Buddha, however, once his *chandarāga* is destroyed, it will not reappear *(buddhasya tu prahīṇaṃ san na samudācarati)* at each instance of a new perception. Yaśomitra adds that, for this very reason, Vasubandhu qualified the Buddha's destruction *(prahāṇa)* as not subject to reemergence *(punar anutpattidharmatvāt hatam),* and hence the Buddha alone is totally free from both kinds of ignorance. It is this excellence which distinguishes him from other arhats.[5]

What we glean from this rather obscure commentary is that there is a form of ignorance that pertains not to the true nature of dharmas (which is dispelled by the knowledge of the four noble truths) but to the worldly nature of things, and that persists even after one has become an arhat. An ordinary person can be consumed by curiosity (a form of desire or *chanda*) and will experience dejection at not knowing—or delight *(chandarāga)* at knowing—the desired object. For the arhat, however, his *kleśas* having been destroyed, ignorance of "things" is unable to obstruct the purity of his mind. When a need arises to know something hitherto unknown (i.e., when he becomes aware of his ignorance), the arhat will be mindful and will dispel any delight that may accompany the act of

knowing the new object. In the case of the Buddha there is no such deficiency because he lacks all forms of curiosity and consequent delight, since the objects he wants to know become instantaneously known to him without any effort *(prayoga)* whatsoever.

What is the arhat ignorant of? Vasubandhu mentions three items: (1) the eighteen special *(āveṇika)* dharmas of the Buddha, which are extremely subtle *(paramasūkṣma)*; (2) the infinite variety of gross and subtle material aggregates *(paramāṇusañcita)* that are distant in place *(viprakṛṣṭadeśa)*, and (3) those that are remote in time *(viprakṛṣṭakāla)*. Yaśomitra illustrates these with examples about the arhats Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana.[6] When questioned by the Buddha, Śāriputra admitted that he had no knowledge of the extent of the Tathāgata's countless aggregates of the practices of *śīla* (moral precepts), samādhi (meditation), prajñā (wisdom), and so on. This is because, as Yaśomitra points out, the special *(āveṇika)* dharmas of the Buddha are extremely subtle and no one but the buddhas can know them.

Nor are the other material objects accessible to the cognition of arhats, even when they are not subtle but are distant—that is, separated *(antarita)* by different world systems *(lokadhātu)*. This is illustrated by the Elder Maudgalyāyana's ignorance of the extremely distant world system called Marīci where his mother was reborn; only the Buddha knew her whereabouts. Similarly, remoteness in time can prevent an arhat from knowing a past incident, as happened when a certain person approached Śāriputra seeking renunciation. Śāriputra rejected him because he failed to discern any roots of good *(kuśalamūla)* in him that might lead to nirvāṇa, but the Buddha was able to perceive a subtle seed of salvation *(mokṣabīja)*—the result of a certain wholesome act—which lay hidden like a speck of pure gold in ore, and granted him ordination. As for the countless variety of material objects in their infinite details, only the buddhas, if they cared to, could know them all, for it is said that even the totality of causes that come together to produce the "eye" on a peacock's feather cannot be known by anyone but a buddha, since that is the realm of omniscient cognition. Of course, not all arhats need be equally deficient in all these areas; but all fall far short of that omniscience *(sarvajñabala)* which characterizes a buddha.[7]

The Theravādins shared the Vaibhāṣika belief that omniscience is that mark which distinguishes a buddha from arhats and pratyekabuddhas. We learn from the *Kathāvatthu* and its *Aṭṭhakathā* that the Pubbaseliyas held a view—similar to that of the Vaibhāṣikas—that the arhat may still possess ignorance *(aññāṇa)* and doubt *(kaṃkhā)* because he may be ignorant and doubtful about worldly things, such as names of men, trees, and so forth, and may be excelled in such matters by worldlings *(puthujjana)*.[8] The Theravādins admitted this but concluded that since the arhat has eliminated the *anuśayas,* the ignorance of worldly things

does not in any way affect his attainment of arhatship. This shows that, unlike the Vaibhāṣikas, the Theravādins did not take the term *"aparijñāya"* quoted above literally (as "without having known") but interpreted it as "without truly having understood [every dharma]." They therefore had no dispute with the Pubbaseliyas as long as it was agreed that the arhat's ordinary ignorance did not imply any residual presence of the *anuśayas* of *vicikitsā* (skeptical doubt) and avidyā.

This explains why the expression *"akliṣṭa-ajñāna"* is not attested in the Theravāda Abhidharma, which also fails to provide any explanation (such as those given by Vasubandhu and Yaśomitra) for the absence of this particular form of ignorance in the historical Buddha. Thus we need only examine the Vaibhāṣika texts for a possible solution to the problems of determining (1) the dharmic nature of this *akliṣṭa-ajñāna;* (2) when and how the Buddha destroyed this particular ignorance; and (3) whether its persistence could in any way be detrimental to the status of an arhat.

As seen earlier, *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* is, by definition, ignorance of worldly things—that is, the absence in varying degrees of what is called *saṃvṛti-jñāna* (knowledge of conventional objects).[9] It is therefore not subsumed under avidyā (the foremost *kleśa*) or under such lesser ones as skeptical doubt *(vicikitsā),* all of which are annihilated through the process of mārga. Could the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* be one of the *kleśavāsanās* (impregnations of passions) which, as Étienne Lamotte has so convincingly demonstrated, are destroyed only by the Buddha at the time of attaining perfect enlightenment *(samyaksambodhi),* but which are never destroyed by arhats and which persist to the end of their lives?[10] This does not seem possible because the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* does not fit the description of an impregnation *(vāsanā).* The *kleśavāsanās* are said to be special potentials of past passions that reside in the mind (hence designated impregnations) and that cause a special distortion in vocal and bodily behavior in the arhat's present life. For this reason they are said to be morally indeterminate *(avyākṛta)* special thoughts *(cittaviśeṣa).*[11] The *akliṣṭa-ajñāna,* characterized merely as absence of the knowledge of worldly things, whether gross or subtle, can hardly be described as the source of special distortions of behavior. Nor can this *ajñāna* be a *vāsanā* because, as Yaśomitra states, arhats overcome *ajñāna* (albeit temporarily at the time of attaining arhatship), whereas the *kleśavāsanās* are never destroyed by them. This is further supported by Vasubandhu's statement that the eighteen qualities of the Buddha are called *āveṇika* (special) because he alone has destroyed the *kleśas* together with their *vāsanās.*[12]

If the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* is neither a *kleśa* nor its *vāsanā,* yet is something that can be destroyed, then what is its dharmic nature? It must surely stand for some obscuration or obstruction *(āvaraṇa)* that is capable of preventing the mind from functioning to its fullest capacity—namely,

cognizing, as the Buddha did, even the subtlest objects situated in distant space and time.

This obstruction evidently could not be of the nature of karma (present action), *vipāka* (the fruition of past actions), or *kleśas,* the three kinds of obstructions known to the Vaibhāṣikas.[13] The word that comes immediately to mind is, of course, *jñeyāvaraṇa,* which is often cited as the agent of such obstruction. But strange as it may seem, *jñeyāvaraṇa* is not attested in the works of Vasubandhu and Yaśomitra, although it is not unknown to the *Mahāvibhāṣā.*[14] We do not know the Vaibhāṣika meaning of this term, but they certainly could not have understood it in the manner of the Vijñānavādins, for whom the *jñeya* (the object itself, as separated from the subject, i.e., consciousness) was an *āvaraṇa* (obstruction).[15]

We are thus left with no specific dharma that can be identified with the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna.* Yet how could the Vaibhāṣikas have introduced this whole controversy over the destruction of the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* without first introducing a separate dharma of that name into their dharma list?! Could it be that the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* is indeed a kind of a hindrance—like *styāna* (torpor), for example—but a nonmental dharma of the *cittavipra-yukta* (neither material nor mental) category, capable of preventing the mind from achieving its full potential of absolute clarity? The *kleśas* certainly contribute to the prevention of this clarity by creating impurities such as wrong views, doubt, lust, hatred, pride, restlessness, and avidyā; but the destruction of these passions alone does not seem to result in total clarity of mind. The *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* must therefore be conceived of as that (undesignated!) dharma that can survive even when the passions are removed, and that can hinder the mind from achieving its full potential of cognizing all that is knowable.

The ignorance that persists after achieving arhatship may rightly be called *akliṣṭa* because there are no defilements *(kleśas)* beyond that stage. But in the case of the Buddha this ignorance is said to be forever eliminated with the destruction of the *kleśas.* Hence it is appropriate to investigate the stage on the mārga (path) where this elimination occurs. Also, is the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* destroyed at one stroke, like *satkāyadṛṣṭi* (personality-belief) at the level of *darśanamārga* (the path of vision), or is it overcome piecemeal, like the afflictions of *rāga* (desire), *māna* (pride), and avidyā, through the various stages of the *bhāvanāmārga* (the path of practice)? We know that the destruction of this ignorance cannot occur at the stage of *darśanamārga,* because according to the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma anything that is of the nature of the unafflicted *(akliṣṭa)* cannot be destroyed by that path.[16] But it cannot be destroyed on the *bhāvanāmārga* either, because on that path a specific *anuśaya* is eliminated through the cultivation of its counteragent, and we have determined that *ajñāna* is not an *anuśaya.* Since both these supramundane or *lokottara*

paths are not relevant here, it seems to follow that in the Vaibhāṣika system, the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* can be destroyed only by the *laukikabhāvanāmārga,* that is, the mundane path of meditation, which can be practiced by any one, at any stage in one's yogic career, with or without the total destruction of the *kleśas.*

The Buddhist texts recognize a variety of meditative techniques, known as *samāpattis,* that can be employed to enlarge progressively the mind's range of cognition. The most important of these are those which confer the six superknowledges *(abhijñās),* five of which pertain to worldly knowledge *(saṃvṛtijñāna).*[17] The absence of this mundane knowledge, together with all the other minor varieties of ignorances, could properly be designated *akliṣṭa-ajñāna.* These knowledges include (1) magical powers *(ṛddhiviṣaya),* (2) the divine eye and ear *(divyacakṣuḥ/ śrotra),* (3) penetration of others' minds *(cetaḥparyāya),* (4) remembrance of former existences *(pūrvanivāsānusmṛti),* and (5) knowledge of the births and deaths of others *(cyutyupapādajñāna).* Although they admittedly do not constitute "omniscience," these five do encompass a great many objects described by Vasubandhu as "subtle" and "distant in space and time," knowledge of which is blocked by *akliṣṭa-ajñāna.* If, as Yaśomitra states, an arhat temporarily overcomes *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* prior to attaining arhatship, this probably means that for a time he acquires these five *abhijñās,* together with the sixth *abhijñā*—namely, *āsravakṣayajñāna* (knowledge of the extinction of the influxes), which confirms his status as an arhat. Only this final *abhijñā* has a lasting effect, because it alone is accomplished by *pratisaṃkhyānirodha* (extinction through knowledge of the four noble truths); still, it has no effect on the arhat's ignorance in worldly matters, since the other five *abhijñās* are of only temporary duration. In the case of the Buddha, however, the Vaibhāṣikas claimed that even *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* is annihilated forever, because it is destroyed by the practice of its counteragent *(pratipakṣa)* and, in the words of Yaśomitra, through *anāsravajñāna.* Although the precise meaning of this rather unusual term is not known, Yaśomitra probably uses it as a synonym for *āsravakṣayajñāna,* the sixth *abhijñā* and terminus of the *bhāvanāmārga.*

Would it be correct to postulate, then, that whereas an arhat attains only the last *abhijñā* by the *lokottarabhāvanāmārga,* the Buddha achieves all the *abhijñās* by the same exalted path? The arhat, after all, aspires only to attain his own nirvāṇa and needs only sufficient worldly knowledge to help him toward that goal. The five mundane *abhijñās* should be adequate for his purposes—especially the fourth and the fifth, dubbed *vidyās* (knowledges), which remove any perplexity regarding his past and future.[18] In the case of the Buddha, however, who aspires to teach all beings, even his *saṃvṛtijñāna* would be infinitely wider in scope and would need to be achieved in a manner consistent with his role. Thus a buddha perfects his *abhijñās* to such an extent that he destroys the *kleśavā-*

*sanās* as well as the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* and thus becomes omniscient forever. This explains the Abhidharma claim that in the case of the Buddha nothing is born of effort *(prayogaja),* that all knowledge is immediately present to him, and that he is called one who not only knows everything but also knows everything in its entirety.[19]

Although an apparent deficiency, the persistence of *akliṣṭa-ajñāna* is no more destructive of arhatship than the persistence of the *kleśavāsanās,* and both are automatically terminated when the final *apratisaṅkhyāni-rodha* (cessation without knowledge of the four noble truths) is attained. Although the Vaibhāṣika accepts the possibility of a fall from arhatship for a certain kind of arhat, the reason given is not the presence of this *ajñāna* or of the *vāsanās* in him, but a sūtra passage cautioning an arhat against "gain and honor," the true meaning of which is hotly disputed by the Sautrāntika Vasubandhu, who rejects the Vaibhāṣika interpretation.[20] The claim of the nonomniscient arhat that he has attained the same nirvāṇa as the omniscient Buddha has been suspect, therefore, only in later Buddhist schools, especially those which formulated the doctrine of Ekayāna. The authors of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra,* for example, do not hesitate to challenge openly the arhat's claim to nirvāṇa. They declare through the mouth of the Elder Śāriputra that the arhats were wrong and conceited in thinking that they had attained nirvāṇa, when what they had reached was only a state of rest *(viśrāma),* and conclude that there is no nirvāṇa without omniscient cognition *(sarvajñatva).*[21] Granted that the real aim of the Mahāyānists is to teach the realization of *sarvadharmaśūnyatā* (emptiness of all existents) when they talk of the Buddha's omniscience, it is nevertheless true that they place equal emphasis on the infinitude of his *saṃvṛtijñāna,* as if the two cognitions were inseparable. This is clear from several passages of the same sūtra, where the arhat is berated not only for his limited understanding of reality, but also for the infinitesimal range of his mental powers pertaining to worldy objects.[22]

It is debatable whether there is an invariable concomitance between the attainment of nirvāṇa and the possession of omniscience. Parallels to both models—that of the nonomniscient arhat and of the omniscient arhat (namely, the Buddha)—can be found in the Yoga and the Jaina traditions, respectively. The entire third book of the *Pātañjala Yogasūtra,* for example, is devoted to a description of the various powers of perfections *(vibhūtis)* that enable a yogin to acquire knowledge of the past and future *(atītānāgatajñāna),* of the speech of all beings *(sarvabhūtarutajñāna),* of his previous births *(pūrvajātijñāna),* of other people's minds *(paracitta-jñāna),* of regions *(bhuvanajñāna),* of the position of stars *(tārāvyūhajñāna),* and so forth. These knowledges are similar to the mundane *abhijñās* of the Buddhists.[23] All can be mastered prior to knowledge of the spirit *(puruṣajñāna),* the first stage in the yogin's progress toward isolation

(*kaivalya*), and hence are comparable to the Buddhist *darśanamārga*. As a result of this *puruṣajñāna*, there arise unceasingly in the yogin vividness (*pratibhā*) and the organs of supernatural hearing, feeling, sight, taste, and smell. The commentator Vyāsa describes the first of these "knowledges," *prātibhajñāna*, as an intuitive knowledge of subtle (*sūkṣma*), concealed (*vyavahita*), or remote (*viprakṛṣṭa*) objects, whether past (*atīta*) or future (*anāgata*)—words that echo Vasubandhu's description of the Buddha's range of cognition.[24] Patañjali warns that these extraordinary perceptions are powers (*siddhis*) only for one whose mind is distracted (*vikṣipta*); otherwise they are obstacles (*antarāya*) in the way of samādhi.[25] When finally the yogin has attained full discernment into the difference between the matter (*prakṛti*, i.e., the *buddhi*) and the spirit (*puruṣa*), he attains "omniscience" (*sarvajñātṛtvam*) and there follows *kaivalya* or the nirvāṇa of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga system.

It is evident from these Yoga aphorisms that although possession of these knowledges and powers may be commendable, they are not prerequisites to *kaivalya*. The yogin is even advised to remain indifferent to them and treat some of them as inevitable byproducts of the practice of meditation. Commenting on the perfections a yogin acquires on his way to the goal of isolation, Vyāsa declares that it is immaterial whether the yogin has or has not attained these powers or knowledges, since one whose seeds of *kleśa* are burnt (*dagdhakleśabīja*) has no need of knowledge and the like.[26] This is the position followed in general by the Theravādins and the Vaibhāṣikas as well: the Buddha's omniscience is highly commendable, but the arhat's nirvāṇa is not dependent on overcoming the *akliṣṭa-ajñāna*, for the seeds of rebirth have been burnt forever equally by both.

The Jaina position appears to agree with the Ekayāna claim that nirvāṇa is inseparable from omniscience, and hence that only the Omniscient One gets the designation of an arhat or, as an Ekayānist would say, only the Buddha has attained nirvāṇa. I will not explain here the precise difference between the omniscience of the Buddha and that of the Jina, as I have dealt with this problem elsewhere.[27] Unlike the Buddhists, the Jainas maintained that ignorance of the true nature of things and other passions (e.g., delusion, attachment, aversion, etc., which correspond to the *anuśayas* in the Abhidharma) and ignorance of worldly objects (*ajñāna*) are two different kinds of defects caused by two distinct karmic forces, the *mohanīya* (deluding) and the *jñānāvaraṇīya* (knowledge-obscuring). The former is destroyed by the Jaina path called *guṇasthāna* (stages of spiritual progress), which is very similar to the *darśana* and *bhāvanā* mārgas of the Buddhists.[28] The consequent purity generated in the soul (ātman) affects its ignorance to some extent also, since the soul gains without any special effort certain supernatural knowledges called *avadhijñāna* (clairvoyance) and *manaḥparyayajñāna*

(telepathy), comparable to some of the mundane *abhijñās* and *siddhis* mentioned earlier. With the total destruction of the *mohanīya*, the aspirant reaches the irreversible stage of liberation (mokṣa), appropriately called *kṣīṇamoha* (the stage of the destruction of delusion), comparable to the *āsravakṣayajñāna* attained by the Buddhist arhat. Yet this is not the final stage for the Jaina arhat; rather, with the destruction of the *mohanīya* the aspirant is for the first time able to engage in higher trances—an advanced stage of the Pure Meditation *(śukladhyāna)* that had commenced earlier—with which he is able to destroy the entire mass of the *jñānāvaraṇīyakarma* that had hitherto obstructed the soul's innate ability for omniscience. Thus he attains *kevalajñāna* (knowledge isolated from all karmic matter and freed from the constraints of the senses and mind) and is able to cognize all existents in their infinite aspects. He will remain in that state forever, even after his final death, which is called nirvāṇa in Jainism.[29]

All four schools discussed here appear to agree that although both avidyā and *ajñāna* are called ignorance, they do not necessarily spring from the same source and may partake of two different natures. Avidyā appears to be caused by some form of passion, whereas *ajñāna* seems to result from a certain lack of clarity, the cause of which cannot be easily determined. This probably explains the near unanimity in these schools' approaches to the problem of overcoming avidyā through almost identical paths. Their failure to devise an equally unanimous way to be rid of *ajñāna* probably derives from their inability to establish an invariable causal relationship between impurity and ignorance.

## Notes

1. *yaḥ sarvathā sarvahatāndhakāraḥ// Abhidharmakośa,* i, 1a. *pratyekabuddhaśrāvakā api kāmaṃ sarvatra hatāndhakārāḥ/ kliṣṭasammohātyantavigamāt/ na tu sarvathā; tathā hy eṣāṃ buddhadharmeṣv ativiprakṛṣṭadeśakāleṣv anantaprabhedeṣu ca bhavaty evākliṣṭam ajñānam// Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* Part I, p. 6. Dvārikadāsa Śāstrī, ed., *Abhidharmakośa and Bhāṣya of Ācārya Vasubandhu with Sphuṭārthā Commentary of Ācārya Yaśomitra* (Varanasi: Bauddha Bhāratī, 1970–1971), pts. 1–4.

2. *ajñānaṃ hi bhūtārthadarśanapratibandhād andhakāram/ tac ca bhagavato buddhasya pratipakṣalābhena sarvatra jñeye punaranutpattidharmatvādd hatam; ato 'sau sarvathā sarvahatāndhakāraḥ// Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* Part I, p. 6.

3. *pratipakṣalābhenety āryamārgalābhena/ vipakṣaḥ kleśaḥ// vipakṣapratighātāya pakṣaḥ pratipakṣa iti kṛtvā/ . . . athavā jñānam anāsravam ajñānapratipakṣaḥ, tasya lābhena// atyantaṃ sarvathā/ sarvatra jñeye punarutpattidharmatvādd hatam/ asamudācāraprahāṇīkṛtam ity arthaḥ// Sphuṭārthāvyākhyā, Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* Part I, p. 6.

4. *nanu ca sarvaṃ sāsravavastu śrāvakapratyekabuddhānām api buddhavat prahīṇam/ kim idam ucyate—kliṣṭasammohasya teṣām atyantavigama iti? . . . tathā hy uktam— . . . "nāham ekadharmam apy aparijñāyāprahāya duḥkhasyāntakriyāṃ vadāmi" iti/ tasmāc chrāvakapratyekabuddhānām api tad akliṣṭam ajñānaṃ cakṣurādivac chandarāgaprahāṇāt prahīṇam eva/ anyathā hi śrāvakapratyekabuddhānāṃ duḥkhāntakriyā na bhavet?* Ibid., Part I, pp. 6–7.

5. *satyam; asty etad evam/ prahīṇam eva teṣāṃ kliṣṭavad akliṣṭam apy ajñānam/ tat tu teṣāṃ cakṣurādivat prahīṇam api samudācarati/ buddhasya tu prahīṇaṃ san na samudācarati/ ata eva viśeṣitaṃ—"punarutpattidharmatvādd hatam" iti/ . . . ye tu vyācakṣate—"śrāvakapratyekabuddhānāṃ kliṣṭasammohamātravigamāt saṃkleśavinivṛttiḥ" iti, tad apavyākhyānam eṣāṃ yathoktam iti pratyācakṣate//* Ibid., Part I, p. 7.

6. Ibid.

7. *tāny etāni catvāry ajñānakāraṇāni bhavanti/ teṣāṃ kvacid ekam/ kvacid dve/ kvacit trīṇi/ kvacic catvārīti sambhavato yojyāni//* Ibid., p. 8.

8. Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids, trans., *Points of Controversy (Kathāvatthu),* (London: Pali Text Society, 1960), pp. 114–119.

9. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* Part IV, p. 1108.

10. Étienne Lamotte, "Passions and Impregnations of the Passions in Buddhism," L. Cousins, ed., *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I. B. Horner* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974), 91–104.

11. *kā punar iyaṃ vāsanā nāma śrāvakāṇām? yo hi yatkleśacaritaḥ pūrvaṃ tasya tatkṛtaḥ kāyavākceṣṭāvikārahetusāmarthyaviśeṣaś citte vāsanety ucyate/ avyākṛtaś cittaviśeṣo vāsaneti bhadantĀnatavarmā// Sphuṭārthāvyākhyā, Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* Part IV, p. 1093.

12. *kasmād ete āveṇikā buddhadharmā ucyante? savāsanaprahāṇāt// Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* Part IV, p. 1093.

13. *trīṇy āvaraṇāny uktāni bhagavatā/ karmāvaraṇaṃ kleśāvaraṇaṃ vipākāvaraṇaṃ ca//* Ibid., Part II, p. 722.

14. I am indebted to Dr. Collett Cox for the information that the terms *"kleśāvaraṇa"* and *"jñeyāvaraṇa"* are found in the *Mahāvibhāṣā, T* 27.724b28. Mr. Nobuyoshi Yamabe has kindly drawn my attention to a passage in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (*T* 27.42b24–c6) which seems to suggest that the concept of *mithyājñāna* (false knowledge—which may have some relation to *ajñāna*) was considered to be a form of *kliṣṭaprajñā* (defiled wisdom), and in the case of the arhat was applied only from the conventional *(saṃvṛti)* point of view.

15. It is not likely that the Vaibhāṣikas would have interpreted *jñeyāvaraṇa* as a *dauṣṭhulya* (depravity), as it is described by Asaṅga (*jñeyāvaraṇadauṣṭhulyaṃ sarvajñatāvipakṣaḥ,* i.e., a form of depravity that is the adversary of omniscience), since for the Vaibhāṣikas it would still constitute some form of *kleśa.* See Nathmal Tatia, *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣyam of Asaṅga,* Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series No. 17 (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1976), 93. It should be noted, however, that Sthiramati follows the Abhidharma tradition, since in his *Triṃśikāvijñaptibhāṣya* he does describe the term *"jñeyāvaraṇa"* as *akliṣṭa-ajñāna: jñeyāvaraṇam api sarvasmin jñeye jñānapravṛttipratibandhabhūtam akliṣṭam ajñānam//* Sylvain Lévi, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1925), 15. But he fails to clarify the precise denotation of the term in this context. Our surmise is substantiated by Prajñākaramati's gloss on *jñeyāvaraṇa* as *"jñeyam eva samāropitatvāt āvṛtiḥ,"* an oppositional *karmadhāraya,* in his commentary on the following: *kleśajñeyāvṛtitamaḥpratipakṣo hi śūnyatā/ śīghraṃ sarvajñatākāmo na bhāvayati tāṃ katham//* See P. L. Vaidya, *Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva together with Prajñākaramati's Pañjikā,* Buddhist Sanskrit Texts Series, No. XII (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960), chap. 9, v. 55.

16. *na dṛṣṭiheyam akliṣṭaṃ na rūpaṃ nāpy aśaṣṭajam// Abhidharmakośa, Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* Part I, p. 110.

17. Ibid., Part IV, p. 1106.

18. Ibid., Part IV, p. 1113.

19. *buddhasya nāsti kiñcit prāyogikam/ tasya sarvadharmeṣvaratvād icchāmātrapratibaddhaḥ sarvaguṇasampatsammukhībhāvaḥ// Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* Part IV, p. 1106.

20. See ibid., Part III, pp. 986–1002.

21. *tathaiva śrāvakāḥ sarve prāptanirvāṇasaṃjñinaḥ/ jino 'tha deśayet tasmai viśrāmo 'yaṃ na nirvṛtiḥ// upāya eṣa buddhānāṃ vadanti yad imaṃ nayam/ sarvajñtvam ṛte nāsti nirvāṇaṃ tat samārabha//* See P. L. Vaidya, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra,* Buddhist Sanskrit Texts (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1960), chap. 5, vv. 74–75.

22. Ibid., vv. 65–73.

23. Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, *Pātañjala-Yogadarśanam together with the Bhāṣya of Vyāsa and the Tattvavaiśāradīvyākhyā of Vācaspati* (Varanasi: Bhāratīya Vidyā Prakāśana, 1963).

24. *tataḥ prātibhaśrāvaṇavedanādarśāsvādavārtā jāyante// prātibhāt sūkṣmavyavahitaviprakṛṣṭātītānāgatajñānam/ . - . . ity etāni nityaṃ jāyante//* Ibid., pp. 137–138.

25. *te samādhāv upasargā vyutthāne siddhayaḥ//* Ibid., p. 138.

26. *tārakaṃ sarvaviṣayaṃ sarvathāviṣayam akramaṃ ceti vivekajaṃ jñānam//* Ibid., p. 153. . . . *prāptavivekajñānasyāprāptavivekajñānasya vā/ . . . sattvapuruṣayoḥ śuddhisāmye kaivalyam iti// yadā nirdhūtarajastamomalaṃ buddhisattvaṃ . . . dagdhakleśabījaṃ bhavati tadā . . . śuddhiḥ/ etasyām avasthāyāṃ kaivalyaṃ bhavatīśvarasya vā vivekajñānabhāgina itarasya vā/ na hi dagdhakleśabījasya jñāne punar apekṣā kvacid asti . . . //* Ibid., p. 154.

27. Padmanabh S. Jaini, "On the *Sarvajñatva* of Mahāvīra and the Buddha," in Cousins, ed., *Studies in Honour of I. B. Horner,* pp. 71–90.

28. For a description of the *guṇasthānas,* see Padmanabh S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 272–273.

29. *mohakṣayāj jñānadarśanāvaraṇāntarāyakṣayāc ca kevalam// mohanīye kṣīṇe jñānāvaraṇadarśanāvaraṇāntarāyeṣu kṣīṇeṣu ca kevalajñānadarśanam utpadyate/ . . . mohakṣayād iti pṛthakkaraṇaṃ kramaprasiddhyarthaṃ yathā gamyeta pūrvaṃ mohanīyaṃ kṛstnaṃ kṣīyate tato 'ntarmuhūrtaṃ chadmasthavītarāgo bhavati/ tato 'sya jñānadarśanāvaraṇāntarāyaprakṛtīnāṃ tisṛṇāṃ yugapat kṣayo bhavati/ tataḥ kevalam utpadyate//* See Khubcandra Siddhāntaśāstrī, *Sabhāṣya-Tattvārthādhigamasūtra* (Agas: Rājacandra Jaina Śāstramālā, 1932), 437.

# Paths Terminable and Interminable

Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

The imagination is always at the end of an era.
Wallace Stevens

Tracks—the signs of the past presence of another—become a path only in retrospect; a path is known to be true only by those who have reached its end, accurately charted only by those who have followed its course. All Buddhists, irrespective of doctrinal affiliation, profess that the Buddha reached the end of the path and that he also proclaimed its route to the world. But with the development of the tradition, the Buddha's achievement was seen less as revelation than as restoration, a retracing of the path trod by the buddhas of forgotten aeons. That path was increasingly seen as more and more protracted, encompassing lifetimes of practice, finally reaching, in the Mahāyāna, the generally accepted length of three periods of innumerable aeons (which Har Dayal has kindly calculated for us at $384 \times 10^{58}$ years). The process of enlightenment was no longer the simple cultivation of social virtues suggested in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* but an intricate complex of specific antidotes for specific afflictions that were to be abandoned in sequence.

The mapping of the path became the purview of the savants of the Abhidharma, both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna—the Buddhist scholastics. The term "scholasticism" here refers to the tradition of Buddhist commentary that is concerned above all with system. Like the scholastic philosophers of medieval Europe, the Buddhists made use of definition, division, and demonstration to identify problems of apparent inconsistency and to formulate answers that resolve such inconsistencies, armed with the twin weapons of scripture *(āgama)* and reason *(yukti)*. "Scholasticism" is used to connote not a method of inquiry marked by a closed formality but a form of reflection which assumes that reality is accessible to the human mind; that the premises of truth are contained in the pronouncements of the Buddha (which, for the thinkers examined here, include the Mahāyāna sūtras); and that every principle must be carried out to its logical conclusion (as defined by the system).[1]

The scholastic delineations of the path read not as records of personal experience but as the pronouncements of theorists and technicians, who do not speak from the end of a path that they themselves have reached. Étienne Lamotte observed that the Abhidharma was "the work of scholars labouring in cells, far from the noisy crowd which would be incapable of grasping the import of the work carried out and discussed among specialists."[2] Theirs is not a path that is traversed among the palm trees; rather, it is a path inscribed on the leaves of those trees, a path that is broken by writing.

What the scholastics describe is a path that is only strangely retrospective, constructed by looking backward from a projected goal. This strangeness is multiplied by the realization that a path requires a double absence—the absence of the being who made the tracks, and the absence which is the tracks themselves. A path is an intrusion into the forest, a violent rupture of the natural, and its marks are the broken branch and gouged earth, the absence of the pristine state. A path requires that the previous state be somehow effaced; what is present in a path is an absence. The tracks that collectively constitute that path immediately point away from themselves to what is not there, namely, the previous unbroken state and its breaker.[3] We cannot pause to consider the nature of the forest through which the Buddhist path is broken. But for the Buddhist the breaker is the Buddha, and Buddhist scholasticism is predicated on his particular absence—in the nirvāṇa without remainder for the Hīnayāna, in the dharmakāya for the Mahāyāna. The Ābhidharmikas thus made maps, present representations of a hypothetically future destination, that place from which one is now absent. Enlightenment could serve as the present and perpetual object of scholastic reflection only as long as it remained absent in meditative experience. So long as wisdom arose merely from hearing *(śrutamayīprajñā),* the wisdom arisen from meditation *(bhāvanāmayīprajñā)* could be continually exalted as supreme precisely because it was absent. (Perhaps, in the end, it is the differentiation of scholastic reflection and meditative experience, in which *vikalpa* (discursive thought) is devalued before samādhi, that needs to be called radically into question. It may be that both are burdened [*āropa*] with diffusion [*prapañca*].)

The discourse of Buddhist scholasticism, therefore, provides a place to explore present theoretical questions more than a guide for future practice or a memoir of past experience; tracking produces more tracks. The path became a description of a state rather than a process—a path that was so long, and whose end was so distant, that it became a map of the present and of all the questions that attend it. For the Mahāyāna scholastics, that map had at its center a detailed outline of the present nature of the mind, traced in terms of defilement and purification. It included attempts to control from the present those of the past who claimed to have already reached the destination by another route. And

it contained projections from the present into the future, speculating about a time, whether real or hypothetical, when all beings would reach the terminus of the single true path aboard the single true vehicle. It is this present, past, and future that will be considered here: the present with its elaborate structure of defilements and their counteragents; the past with its problem of the arhats, who claimed to have reached enlightenment before the proclamation of the true path, the Mahāyāna; and the future with its question of whether the promise of the bodhisattva will someday be fulfilled, of whether the cycle of birth and death will ever end.

For the Indian Mahāyāna scholastics, the most important śāstra for the exposition of the path was the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* (Ornament of Realization) of Maitreyanātha. Traditionally considered to be a commentary on the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* (The Perfection of Wisdom in 25,000 Stanzas), it is little more than a series of terms drawn from the sūtra, from which commentators sought to construct the components of the bodhisattva's path, the "hidden teaching" of the Perfection of Wisdom sūtras. The *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* is organized under eight headings. The first is the knowledge of all aspects *(sarvākārajñātā),* the omniscient mind of the buddha which is the goal of the Mahāyāna path, the knowledge of all the varieties of phenomena as well as their modes (i.e., their emptiness). The second topic is the knowledge of paths *(margajñātā),* said to be essential for the achievement of omniscience. The bodhisattva must know not only the entire structure of his or her own path but that of the paths of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas as well. The third topic is the knowledge of all *(sarvajñātā),* that is, of all the categories of phenomena by which the followers of the Hīnayāna gain liberation from rebirth. The relationship among these three knowledges is suggested in the expression of worship that opens the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra:*

> Obeisance to the mother of buddhas and the assembly of śrāvakas and bodhisattvas, [she] who, through the knowledge of all, leads śrāvakas seeking peace to peace; who, through the knowledge of paths, causes those [bodhisattvas] aiding transmigrators to accomplish the aims of the world; through being fully endowed with whom, the *munis* set forth the varieties of all aspects.[4]

The three knowledges are set forth in reverse order here. It is through the knowledge that there is no person among all the various categories of phenomena that śrāvakas find the peace of nirvāṇa. It is through the knowledge of the paths that bodhisattvas are able to lead sentient beings to the most appropriate path. And it is through their knowledge of all the varieties and modes of phenomena that buddhas are able to set forth the sūtras.

It is the second knowledge, knowledge of the paths, and some of its

attendant issues that provide the doctrinal basis for this chapter. For the Dge-lugs-pa order of Tibetan Buddhism, the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* is the first and most exhaustively studied of the five Indian works that comprise the basis of the monastic curriculum.[5] Among the twenty-one commentaries on it enumerated by the tradition,[6] the Dge-lugs-pas rely most heavily on two of the commentaries of Haribhadra, the *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā* (Illumination of the "Ornament for Realization")[7] and the shorter *Sphuṭārtha* (Clear Meaning).[8] There is also a massive Tibetan commentatorial literature on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra.* I will draw primarily on Tsong-kha-pa's *Legs bshad gser phreng* (A Garland of Gold Eloquence), which, according to tradition, he undertook in 1375 at the age of 18, but will also make reference to five widely used supplements to Tsong-kha-pa's work.[9]

The knowledge of the paths is defined as a realization *(abhisamaya)* by a Mahāyāna noble person (ārya), that realization being conjoined with the wisdom which understands intuitively that the three paths do not truly exist.[10] In other words, the knowledge of the paths is by definition possessed solely by bodhisattvas and, further, by *āryabodhisattvas,* those who have achieved the path of vision *(darśanamārga)* through direct realization of emptiness. What qualifies such understanding as a knowledge of the paths is that which the bodhisattva understands to be empty—namely, one of the three paths: the path of the śrāvaka, the path of the pratyekabuddha, or the path of the bodhisattva. To have knowledge of the paths (one of the three sublime knowledges set forth in the Perfection of Wisdom sūtras), a bodhisattva must have gained direct understanding of emptiness and be fully conversant with all the components not only of the Mahāyāna path but of the two Hīnayāna paths as well, this latter knowledge being essential for effectively teaching those of the Hīnayāna lineage. Thus the knowledge of the paths is of three types: the knowledge of the paths of śrāvakas, of pratyekabuddhas, and of bodhisattvas.

To know the śrāvaka path is to know its structure and to know that, like all phenomena, the śrāvaka path is ultimately empty.[11] The bodhisattva must know the path that śrāvakas follow, and this entails knowing both the afflictions that the śrāvaka must abandon and their antidotes. These are set forth for the Dge-lugs-pas in textbooks derived by Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, and 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa from earlier Indian and Tibetan commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra.* Some of these are textbooks on the seventy topics *(don 'dun bcu),* for which these authors derived definitions *(mtshan nyid),* equivalent categories *(don gcig pa'i chos),* and perimeters *(sa mtsham).* A further process of extraction, interpolation, and conflation resulted in a genre of works known as *sa lam (*bhūmi-mārga),* which set forth the paths of śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas accord-

ing to what the Dge-lugs-pas called the Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika school.[12]

Paths are states of mind to be consciously engendered in a specific order. For all three vehicles, this order begins with the path of accumulation *(saṃbhāramārga, tshogs lam)* and ends with the path of no further learning *(aśaikṣamārga, mi slob lam).* The progression through these paths is delineated in the Dge-lugs-pa *sa lam* texts using a vocabulary of separation, abandonment, and destruction, of opposition between affliction *(nyon mongs, kleśa)* and antidote *(gnyen po, pratipakṣa).* The list of afflictions is long and complicated, the antidotes relatively simple.

The śrāvaka on the path of vision abandons the artificial afflictive obstructions *(nyon sgrib kun btags)* through the periods of doctrinal forbearance *(chos bzod, dharmakṣānti),* subsequent forbearance *(rjes bzod, anvayakṣānti),* doctrinal knowledge *(chos shes, dharmajñāna),* and subsequent knowledge *(rje shes, anvayajñāna).*[13] Following the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* the *sa lam* texts explain that the path of vision consists of fifteen moments of understanding of the four truths, the sixteenth moment marking the beginning of the path of meditation. According to Vasubandhu, there are four moments of understanding for each of the four truths. The first moment is that of doctrinal forbearance of the truth of suffering with regard to the desire realm, in which the afflictions of the desire realm associated with the truth of suffering are abandoned; it is followed by a moment of doctrinal knowledge of the truth of suffering with regard to the desire realm, which is the understanding that the afflictions of that level have indeed been abandoned. This is followed by a moment of subsequent forbearance in which the afflictions associated with the truth of suffering in the form and formless realms are abandoned, which is followed by subsequent knowledge of the truth of suffering with regard to the upper realms.

This sequence of four moments—doctrinal forbearance and doctrinal knowledge (with regard to the desire realm) and subsequent forbearance and subsequent knowledge (with regard to the upper realms)—is repeated for the remaining truths of origin, cessation, and path. In each case, the moments of understanding called forbearance are the times when the afflictions are actually abandoned; they are called uninterrupted paths *(bar chad med lam, anantaryamārga).* The eight moments of knowledge are the states of realizing that the afflictions of that particular level have been abandoned; they are called paths of liberation *(rnam grol lam, vimuktimārga).*[14]

In the Dge-lugs-pa *sa lam,* however, the sixteen moments of forbearance and knowledge do not occur sequentially but are conflated into two: an uninterrupted path, which comprises the eight moments of doctrinal forbearance and subsequent forbearance, and a path of liberation, which comprises the eight moments of doctrinal knowledge and

subsequent knowledge. In the first moment, all the artificial afflictive obstructions are destroyed by a single antidote, the initial realization of personal selflessness *(gang zag gi bdag med, pudgalanairātmya),* which is the path of vision; in the second moment, the śrāvaka realizes that those afflictions have been destroyed. The distinction between "doctrinal" and "subsequent" is maintained with the explanation that doctrinal forbearance is the understanding that the four truths are devoid of a personal self, whereas subsequent forbearance is the understanding that the consciousness realizing that this is the case (i.e., doctrinal forbearance itself) is not a personal self.[15] But this distinction, as well as the sixteen moments of forbearance and knowledge themselves, seems to be preserved merely to maintain the Sarvāstivādin vocabulary. Dkon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po writes:

> The sixteen moments of forbearance and knowledge of the path of vision occur in two periods: the eight forbearances are produced simultaneously and the eight knowledges are produced simultaneously. The length of time of the uninterrupted path and the path of liberation of a śrāvaka's path of vision is the smallest unit of time in which an action can be accomplished.[16]

On the path of meditation, the śrāvaka abandons eighty-one afflictions, nine for each of the nine levels of saṃsāra: the desire realm, the four concentrations of the form realm, and the four formless absorptions. In each case, however, the antidote is single—the realization of personal selflessness. The path of the śrāvaka ends when the subtlest of the afflictions, the smallest of the small associated with *bhavāgra* (the summit of existence), is destroyed by the eighty-first uninterrupted path on the path of meditation. The path of liberation that follows immediately afterward is the first moment of the path of no further learning.[17] The śrāvaka is now an arhat and has completed his or her path, or so it would seem.

The pratyekabuddhas receive the least attention among the three types of practitioners considered in the Dge-lugs-pa *sa lam.* They abandon the same eighty-one afflictions over the course of the path of meditation, but employ a different antidote. Drawing on *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* II.8, the Dge-lugs-pas hold that pratyekabuddhas understand something subtler than what is understood by śrāvakas, namely, the nonexistence of external objects. Maitreyanātha's text says:

> Understand that the path of the rhinoceros-like is comprised by abandoning the conception of objects, not abandoning the conception of subjects, and by a [special] foundation.[18]

This understanding that objects do not exist as entities separate from the consciousnesses that perceive them is termed "the realization of the coarse selflessness of phenomena" *(chos kyi bdag med rags pa).*[19] As in the

case of the śrāvaka, a single antidote destroys myriad afflictions, but over a protracted path.

To attain buddhahood, bodhisattvas must abandon all the afflictive obstructions *(nyon sgrib, kleśāvaraṇa)* as well as all the obstructions to omniscience (*shes sgrib, jñeyāvaraṇa,* lit., "obstructions to [all] objects of knowledge"). Dkon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po writes:

> On the occasion of the path of vision, there are 112 afflictions that are to be abandoned. There are also 108 obstructions to omniscience to be abandoned on the path of vision. There are sixteen innate afflictive obstructions that are abandoned on the first through the tenth levels *(sa, bhūmi)* of the path of meditation. The seeds of the 108 innate obstructions to omniscience are abandoned on these same levels.[20]

To arrive at the figure of 112 artificial afflictive obstructions, the Sarvāstivādin model of calculating afflictions by employing the four truths and three realms as constants in the equation is maintained. The variable is the number of afflictions associated with each of the three realms.[21]

The actual antidote to each of these afflictions, both artificial and innate, is the wisdom consciousness that knows all phenomena to be empty of true existence. Because this wisdom discerns the subtle selflessness of phenomena (as understood by the Svātantrikas), it destroys all forms of the afflictive obstructions and the obstructions to omniscience. It is the single panacea that effects the abandonment of the 84,000 afflictions.

I present these data in order to consider several questions. Given the significant quantitative imbalance between the obstructions and their antidote, why was the Sarvāstivādin model of various levels of misapprehension of the four truths in the three realms maintained, while the antidote to ignorance was understood to be the knowledge of selflessness alone (albeit in one of three forms)? A traditional positivist response would hold that the mind has been contaminated over countless births, and that the defilements are engrained from the surface to the depths and can be dislodged only through persistent and prolonged purification. As for the single antidote, there may have been a conflation, in the last phases of Buddhism in India, of the purificatory and the visionary models of the earlier tradition, with the purification of myriad discrete defilements held to be effected by the vision of a single truth.

For the Mahāyāna, the focus was not on three marks of existence but on one, selflessness, and there was an attendant reduction in antidotes from the sixteen aspects of the four truths to only one, the third aspect of suffering (albeit reinterpreted), emptiness. It was this vision of emptiness that was said to destroy, in one moment on the path of vision, all seeds for future rebirth in the unfortunate realms of animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. Yet this was only the beginning of the first of ten

*bhūmis;* it would take the bodhisattva two periods of innumerable aeons to complete the path, aeons in which, along with performing the other five pāramitās, s/he was to enter repeatedly into direct yogic perception *(yogipratyakṣa)* of an emptiness no more profound than that which s/he had first seen. These repeated visions of the same emptiness were to serve as antidotes to a wide variety of afflictions and thus effect the removal of the entire range of obstructions—both those to liberation (the *kleśāvaraṇa*) and those to the omniscience of a buddha (the *jñeyāvaraṇa*).

Despite Avalokiteśvara's proclamation to Śāriputra in the *Heart Sūtra* that "in that way, all phenomena are empty, that is, without characteristic, unproduced, unceased, stainless, not stainless, undiminished, unfilled," the categories of the stainless *(vimala)* and the not stainless *(avimala)* persisted, able to withstand the radical critique of the Mādhyamika. An historicist might argue that the persistence of this complex of defilements as an essential component of the vocabulary of Buddhist scholasticism only testifies to the inability of Buddhist practitioners to become enlightened: there must be such obstructions because, despite the earnest efforts of meditators, no one seemed to be arriving at the further shore. This very argument was put forth in China to prove the presence of the degenerate age.

Such an argument presupposes that the path must be long because the defilements are complex. Let us consider for a moment whether the defilements are complex so that the path may be long. Might one account for the unwieldy length of the path by examining the general conservatism of those concerned with the preservation of system? If there are many claims to enlightenment, there will be, in the absence of adjudication by the founder, many claims to authority, and thus a challenge to scholasticism. If there are many claims to buddhahood, there will inevitably be conflicting claims about the nature of reality and how it is to be understood. This is a challenge to system, for the role of the Abhidharma was to express the inexpressible content of the Buddha's enlightenment, in doctrinal formulations of the nature of reality, in the categorization of veridical and deceptive states of consciousness, and in the delineation of a process of purification.

Indeed, the role of the Abhidharma was to domesticate enlightenment. The infinite prolongation of the path removed enlightenment from the hazardous present and placed it in the safety of the unforeseeable future as the sole possession of the exalted, absent Buddha, extracting from it the danger and power, risks and benefits associated with the possession of the truth and securing for the Ābhidharmikas, if not enlightenment, at least its discourse.[22]

If the primary task of scholasticism is the imposition and defense of consistency, then enlightenment can remain uniform only to the extent

that it remains inaccessible, if not impossible. If we see the development of the mārga schema as representing a transition from autobiographical to universal experience, then it would seem that experience can become universal precisely to the extent that it is the experience of no one. But such an explanation has almost a scent of conspiracy about it; it is what E. A. H. Blunt might term a "voluntarist explanation," whereby the complex of defilements and their antidotes are viewed as a wholly artificial product of the Ābhidharmikas, the elite of the Buddhist order.[23] For the moment, let us make the more drastic move of separating the complex of defilements from the question of enlightenment.

Apart from the doctrine of selflessness, one of the principal means by which the Buddha seems to have sought to distinguish his dharma from that of the adherents of various sects that later came be called Hinduism was his questioning of caste hierarchy, and particularly its attendant claims to the hereditary purity of the brahmins. He also widely ridiculed purification rites as having any efficacy as means to liberation.[24] Yet the very language of defilement and purification, of contact and separation, that he repressed in the physical sphere returns in the sphere of consciousness. Consider *kleśa* (impurity, affliction), *mala* (dirt, filth, excretion), *anuśaya* (outflow, abscess), *āsrava* (discharge, contaminant), *viṣa* (poison, venom), *kaṣaya* (defect, decay), *pāpa* (vile, wretched). Their correlate states of purity *(śuddhi, viśuddhi)* are too numerous to list: the *Mahāvyutpatti* provides fifty-nine terms under the heading "names for abandoning and relinquishing" *(nisṛjāparyāyāḥ, spangs pa dang dor ba la sogs pa'i ming)*.

If we are to postulate the isomorphic introjection of the language of caste defilement and purification from the physical into the mental realm, we should consider for a moment the theoretical basis of caste. In his classic study, *Homo Hierarchicus,* Louis Dumont argues that "the immediate source of the notion [of ritual impurity] is to be found in the temporary impurity which the Hindu of good caste contacts in organic life."[25] Elsewhere, he speaks of "the irruption of the biological into social life."[26] On this model, the Buddhist defilements *(kleśa)* would function as the organic states of mind that the Buddhist must avoid, for the impurity they discharge is not easily expunged and, once touched, can cause pain over lifetimes. The *kleśas* are organic to the extent that they are states of mind *(caitta)* that occur quite commonly, even naturally: desire, anger, pride, doubt, jealousy, lethargy, excitement, laziness, forgetfulness, distraction. It is contact with these states that must be avoided, and it is separation from them that is the goal of the path. Yet in the Buddhist psychological systems, these states are not regarded as natural, innate, organic to consciousness; as Dharmakīrti declares at *Pramāṇavārttika* I.210 (in a statement to which we will return), "The nature of the mind is clear light; the defilements are adventitious."[27]

This reversal should not seem surprising, for it is central to Buddhist soteriology that the mental state of quiescence (however variously interpreted), which is absent in ordinary states of consciousness, should be privileged as the natural, organic state, while those states that seem most commonly to occupy the mind should be denigrated as adventitious. The function of the path is very much one of separation from these adventitious states, and it operates, as Dumont observes about caste regulations, as a means of "organizing contact with purificatory agents and abolishing it with external agents of impurity."[28] Whether the Buddhists view the impure as organic or inorganic is perhaps less significant than the fact that the basic binary opposition of pollution and purity is maintained.

To gain a further perspective on the nature of this opposition in Buddhist path-structures, we must go beyond the position that the Buddhist is simply seeking separation from the organic, as useful as this position might be in understanding nirvāṇa as a variation on the *ayoga-kevala* (inactive isolation) of the Jainas and the *kaivalya* (isolation) of the Yoga school. Here is it useful to recall Lord Chesterfield's famous dictum that "dirt is matter out of place." This definition becomes epigrammic for Mary Douglas, serving as the basis for her reflections on pollution beliefs in *Purity and Danger.* For Douglas, that there is something that a society identifies as dirt implies the existence of system; dirt is that which does not fit, and beliefs about pollution identify the areas of greatest systematization in a society. She writes:

> For us dirt is a kind of compendium category for all events which blur, smudge, contradict, or otherwise confuse accepted classifications. The underlying feeling is that a system of values which is habitually expressed in a given arrangement of things has been violated.[29]

Is such a category applicable to the Buddhist case? Indeed, the *kleśas* are portrayed as states that disrupt, muddle, and confuse the mind, displacing virtuous states and inducing present agitation and future suffering. And, as we have seen, the vocabulary of taint, stain, and defilement is very much in evidence. If we follow Douglas, we must see the Buddhist preoccupation with the categories of separation and purification as an attempt to impose a system, not onto societal relations, as is the concern of the social anthropologist, but onto mental activity. The path thus becomes, with its afflictions and antidotes, a process of demarcation. But Douglas argues that the attitude to dirt goes through a two-stage process. Dirt comes into existence through the differentiating activity of the mind, as "a by-product of the creation of order." As a differentiated entity, it then functions as a threat to the established categories; it is at this point that dirt is dangerous. In the end dirt loses its identity and hence its danger; "where there is no differentiation, there is no defilement."[30]

This final stage appears to be absent from the Buddhist case (except perhaps in tantra), for it is through the very classification of the states of mind termed *kleśas* that control is gained and maintained, not through their loss of identity, which could only occur in the ever-distant enlightenment. Desire, the irrational, is classified so that it can be controlled; its ultimate demise is something only hypothesized by the scholastics. As we have seen, even Nāgārjuna's critique could not dislodge the obsession with category from Buddhist soteriologies. This may, on some level, account for the persistence of the notion of a specific antidote for a specific affliction, even when the antidote remained in each case the vision of selflessness; it is in binary opposition that structure is maintained, and among the many things that the Indian delineations of the path may be about, there seems to be nothing more important than structure.

We might ask how appropriate it is to apply categories derived from the analysis of society to the analysis of a religious path, how appropriate to apply criteria derived from the study of primitive cultures to Buddhism, one of the "great traditions." Yet the Buddhist conception of defilement and purity seems to differ only in degree from that which occurs in the primitive or social sphere. Dumont notes that in the tribal situation, contact with the impure acts directly on the person's health, causing disease or misfortune, whereas for the Hindu such contact entails a fall in social status.[31] For the Buddhist it is a case of deferral: contact with the impure plants the seed for suffering, either mental or physical, at some point in the near or distant future. And, if we follow Douglas, the Buddhist worldview remains primitive to the extent that its universe is personal, behaving "as if it was intelligent, responsive to signs, symbols, gestures, gifts."[32]

A more sophisticated view of what constitutes the primitive mentality is put forth by Paul Ricoeur in *The Symbolism of Evil.* For Ricoeur, the primary characteristic of the primitive stage is that "evil and misfortune have not been dissociated, in which the ethical order of doing ill has not been distinguished from the cosmo-biological order of faring ill: suffering, sickness, death, failure."[33] That is, suffering is seen as a symptom, the link between defilement and suffering being one of causality and rationalization. Such rationalization is the very function of the doctrine of karma, which accounts for present events with past deeds, a doctrine that Indian Buddhism sometimes ignored but never called into question. In Ricoeur's view, the mentality of defilement is transcended only when the rationalization of suffering is sacrificed, when suffering becomes inexplicable. This marks the move from the primitive to the ethical, and such a move appears to be absent in Buddhism; thus far, no Book of Job has been discovered among the sūtras. In a statement whereby we might ponder the persistence of the vocabulary of defilement in the discourse of the Buddhist path (that path of which the

bodhisattva must have full knowledge in order to become a buddha), Ricoeur writes:

> Hence it is in the era before this crisis of the first rationalization, before the dissociation of misfortune (suffering, disease, death, failure) and fault that the dread of the impure deploys its anxieties: the prevention of defilement takes upon itself all fears and all sorrows; man, before any direct accusation, is already secretly accused of the misfortunes in the world; wrongly accused—thus does man appear to us at the origin of his ethical experience.[34]

## The *Yāna* Controversy

With his or her knowledge of the paths, the bodhisattva sets forth to persons lacking *bodhicitta* the paths of the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha, that they may thereby purify themselves of defilement. But if the bodhisattva has vowed to bring all beings to enlightenment, can s/he be content in leading them to the liberation of an arhat, or must s/he lead them all to buddhahood? And what of those arhats who have already entered nirvāṇa—can they emerge from the remainderless state? In other words, how are the Mahāyāna Ābhidharmikas to integrate the old routes and destinations into their new and improved map of the path to enlightenment? To put these questions in context, let us return to the chapter of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* devoted to the knowledge of the paths, which begins with the following cryptic verse:

> Light outshining the gods in order that they be suitable, certain object, pervasion, nature, and its function.[35]

The verse refers to a passage that appears in an abbreviated form in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* (Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Stanzas) and in an extended form in the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* at the beginning of the Śakra chapter, in which the lustre of the assembled gods pales in comparison to the brilliance of the Tathāgata. This dispels the pride of the gods, making them suitable vessels for the teaching of the perfection of wisdom, and specifically making it possible for them to develop the aspiration to enlightenment, the "certain object" mentioned in the verse.[36] Subhūti then says:

> Those, however, who rest in the certainty of perfection do not create the aspiration to unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment. Why? Because they have cut themselves off from the stream of saṃsāra; they do not take rebirth in saṃsāra and do not create the aspiration to unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment. And yet, I will admire them as well if they will create the aspiration to unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment. I shall not obstruct their roots of virtue, for one must hold onto the supreme among the supreme dharmas.[37]

Subhūti appears to contradict himself here. On the one hand, he disparages the arhats who have entered nirvāṇa, "those who rest in the certainty of perfection," suggesting that they are aloof from saṃsāra and thus cannot, or do not, create the altruistic aspiration to buddhahood. On the other hand, he promises to admire them if they do so, but without explaining how "those who have cut themselves off from the stream of saṃsāra" might reimmerse themselves. This apparent contradiction illustrates the Mahāyāna's ambivalence toward both the antecedent tradition and those who had already entered nirvāṇa, for the proclamation of the bodhisattva path in the Mahāyāna sūtras carried with it a reevaluation of the path that had been proclaimed before and of those who had followed it to its conclusion. It raised the question of the fate of the arhats.

For the commentators on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra,* this question was addressed in their discussion of the term "pervasion" in the verse above, generally taken to mean that all sentient beings are pervaded by the buddha lineage. Two solutions to the problem of the fate of the arhat were set forth by the Indian masters, solutions that ultimately rested on the question of the number of vehicles. Some sūtras said that there are three, some that there is one. The authors of the sūtras seem for the most part to have been unconcerned with, if not unaware of, conflicting views; they were armed with their claim to *buddhavacana* (word of the Buddha), the pinnacle in the hierarchy of Buddhist discourse, that which having been spoken remains spoken.[38] But for the commentator (unlike the authors of the sūtras), the weapon of authority had to be wielded with both hands—a hand that sought to rewrite only what the sūtras really meant, and a hand that sought to create a new discourse by contriving a consistency among them. This conflict is not one to which the Buddhist commentator alone is subject; rather, it seems endemic to the operation of commentary, as Michel Foucault notes: "Commentary averts the chance element of discourse by giving it its due: it gives us the opportunity to say something other than the text itself, but on condition that it is the text itself which is uttered and, in some ways, finalized."[39]

Tsong-kha-pa, in the second chapter of his commentary to the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra,* adopting the posture of chronicler rather than commentator, catalogued the views of the Indian commentators who said three and those who said one. There were ample passages from the sūtras to support both sides of the issue. For those who championed one final vehicle, there was the prophecy in the *Lotus Sūtra* that Śāriputra would become the Buddha Padmaprabha and the statement in the *Laṅkāvatāra* (Descent to Śrī Laṅka) that śrāvakas are not liberated by the śrāvakayāna, but ultimately are followers of the Mahāyāna.[40] For the proponents of three vehicles, there was the *Akṣayamatinirdeśa* (Teaching of Akṣayamati), which said, "These three are the vehicles that bring about

emancipation: the śrāvakayāna, the pratyekabuddhayāna, and the Mahāyāna."[41] The *Saṃdhinirmocana* (Untying of the Intention) explained why śrāvakas do not enter the Mahāyāna:

> Persons of the śrāvaka lineage only proceed to peace. Although all the buddhas try to establish them in the essence of enlightenment, they are unable to achieve unsurpassed and complete enlightenment. Why? It is because their compassion is meager and they are horrified by suffering and because they are naturally of an inferior lineage.[42]

Not wishing to deny utterly the possibility of śrāvakas becoming buddhas, the proponents of three vehicles could look to the *Saṃdhinirmocana* again, where a distinction was drawn between those śrāvakas described above and those who turn toward enlightenment. The Buddha declares:

> I teach that those śrāvakas who turn toward enlightenment are a type of bodhisattva. It is thus. Having been liberated from the afflictive obstructions, they are exhorted by the tathāgatas to free their minds from the obstructions to omniscience.[43]

Hence it would seem that some śrāvakas follow their path to its final destination while others transfer onto the Mahāyāna. Those who would transfer must do so before entering the remainderless nirvāṇa *(anupādhiśeṣanirvāṇa);*[44] those who have entered the nirvāṇa in which the aggregates no longer remain have severed the possibility of any further effort. This is the position of Asaṅga, as cited by Tsong-kha-pa from the *Nirṇayasaṃgraha* (Compendium of Determination):

> Do those śrāvakas who change [to the Mahāyāna] achieve perfect, complete enlightenment while they abide in the realm of the nirvāṇa with remainder, or do they do so while they abide in the realm of the nirvāṇa without remainder? They do so while they abide in the realm of the nirvāṇa with remainder. Those who abide in the realm of the nirvāṇa without remainder have severed the continuum of all initiative and all striving.[45]

A commentator of Tsong-kha-pa, Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, cites an unspecified Perfection of Wisdom sūtra that speaks of arhats who have entered the remainderless nirvāṇa, saying, "Those who have entered the faultless purity lack the power to create the aspiration to enlightenment."[46] Arhats who have achieved the nirvāṇa with remainder *(sopādhiśeṣanirvāṇa),* that is, those who have destroyed the afflictions but continue to experience the effects of the karma that caused their present lifetime, are able magically to lengthen that lifetime to enable themselves to begin the bodhisattva path. Tsong-kha-pa writes:

> It is explained that they bless their own body so as not to pass into nirvāṇa and, with a magically created body, they display to others the way to pass into [the nirvāṇa] without remainder. With their former bodies, which even gods cannot see, they remain in isolation and complete the collec-

> tions. At that time, they rejoice in their own welfare and are not conscientious about cultivating the path and [so] are exhorted [to do so] by buddhas and bodhisattvas.[47]

This elaborate scheme of dissimulation in which śrāvakas practice the Mahāyāna with invisible bodies is but one example of the price of consistency, demonstrating the length to which Mahāyāna scholastics would go to explain how the śrāvaka could merge onto the bodhisattva path.

The rationale for the doctrine of three vehicles seems to be as follows. Sentient beings differ in their personalities. Some delight in the sufferings of others, some are pained by them. These various dispositions are not the result of social conditioning nor of karma, but are, in effect, genetically determined by a seed possessed by each sentient being in the *ālayavijñāna* (storehouse consciousness). Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, another of Tsong-kha-pa's commentators, writes:

> The seeds of uncontaminated wisdom in the minds of sentient beings [determine] the path of the individual vehicles to which it is suitable that they be led. [These seeds,] ultimately, are the individual lineages that establish the three different capacities of sentient beings, the three different interests, the three different practices, and the three different fruitions of sentient beings.[48]

Thus the presence of different dispositions and interests leads to the postulation of a spiritual determinism in the form of three lineages, and from the presence of lineages a corresponding set of ultimate destinations is inferred, these being the nirvāṇas of the śrāvaka and the pratyekabuddha and the unsurpassed enlightenment of the buddha. Because arhats who have entered the remainderless nirvāṇa by the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha paths have abandoned all the causes for rebirth in saṃsāra, it is impossible for them to achieve buddhahood, which requires many more lifetimes of practice.[49] Hence there are three vehicles, and these vehicles are final.

This apparently commonsensical approach to enlightenment is not in itself sufficient to deal with the sūtras which state that the nirvāṇa of the śrāvaka is like an illusory city conjured by a skillful guide, a waystation for weary travelers to keep them from turning back on their long journey to a distant goal. This simile, best known from the seventh chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra,* is also mentioned by Candrakīrti in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* (Supplement to the Middle Way) at XI.38:

> Therefore, just as a wise [captain] created a pleasant city en route to alleviate the fatigue of those who had set out for a jeweled island, you [created] this vehicle to turn the minds of students to the way of complete peace. [You] set forth [the Mahāyāna] separately when they had given up [the afflictions] and trained their minds.[50]

There is also the statement in the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda* (Lion's Roar of Śrīmālādevī) that arhats are subject to something called "inconceivable rebirth" *(acintyacyutigata),* and the Buddha's exhortation to the arhats in the *Lotus Sūtra:* "You are liberated from suffering but you still have not passed into nirvāṇa. You must seek this buddhayāna."[51] These statements suggest that the nirvāṇa of the Hīnayāna is a penultimate achievement.

The proponents of three vehicles respond to these apparent contradictions by reiterating the distinction between śrāvakas who seek peace and śrāvakas who change, the former entering the nirvāṇa without remainder while the latter, freed from the afflictions, turn to the Mahāyāna before entering nirvāṇa and continue to take rebirth due to the latencies of ignorance and uncontaminated ignorance.[52] With this distinction in place, the proponents of three vehicles can claim that when the sūtras speak of śrāvakas taking inconceivable rebirth, they intend only the śrāvakas who change; śrāvakas who seek peace enter a nirvāṇa without remainder from which they never emerge. Thus when the sūtras speak of the śrāvaka nirvāṇa as a penultimate and illusory destination, they are speaking not to śrāvakas but to bodhisattvas, indicating to them the trifling nature of the Hīnayāna achievement, which they must eschew; the actual nirvāṇa is buddhahood. And when the *Lotus Sūtra* exhorts śrāvakas to nirvāṇa, it is the śrāvakas who change, not those who seek peace, who are addressed, and it is the nirvāṇa of the buddha, not the nirvāṇa without remainder, that they are urged to seek.[53]

It is not to be denied, however, that certain sūtras, most notably the *Lotus,* speak unequivocally of a single vehicle. The proponents of three vehicles must show these sūtras to be subject to interpretation *(neyārtha),* which requires that they demonstrate some intention behind the Buddha's proclamation of a single vehicle, some factual referent that he had in mind when he said, without really meaning it, that there is but one vehicle. The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras) provides seven such referents at XI.53:

> Because the *dharma*[*dhātu*], selflessness, and liberations are similar, because of different lineages, because of having two thoughts, because of emanation, because of finality, [there is] one vehicle.[54]

Vasubandhu, Asvabhāva, and Sthiramati, the Indian commentators on the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra,* interpret this to mean that the use of the term *"ekayāna"* is merely rhetorical, that the term *"ekayāna"* has seven figurative meanings. Let us briefly examine three of them.[55]

It can be said that there is one vehicle when the vehicle is taken to be the person, the one who proceeds to the goal. And the three persons—the śrāvaka, the pratyekabuddha, and the Bhagavan—are one, or the

same *(eka),* in the sense that they are all selfless. Hence when the Buddha spoke of the "one vehicle," he was thinking of the fact that all persons who proceed on the path are similar in that they are selfless, not that there is a single vehicle in the sense of a means of traversing the path.[56]

A second referent, according to the *Sūtrālaṃkāra,* is magical creation *(nirmāṇa),* an allusion to cases in which emanated doubles of the Tathāgata and of śrāvakas display to the world the passage into nirvāṇa. The single vehicle in this case would seem to be the Hīnayāna. Sthiramati, evincing the doceticism of the Mahāyāna, emphasizes that when the Tathāgata displayed the passage into *parinirvāṇa* through the practice of the śrāvaka path, it was not the Tathāgata himself who passed away but only an emanation created by his magical powers. He thereby falsely suggested that there is but one vehicle whereby one may achieve final nirvāṇa in order that sentient beings might be subdued by his skillful methods.[57]

Finally, the term "ultimacy" *(paryanta)* is used to refer to buddhahood itself, and by extension to the Mahāyāna which is its cause. Because the Mahāyāna is the ultimate, supreme, and consummate cause, such that there is none other that surpasses it, and because buddhahood is the ultimate attainment beyond which one cannot proceed, it can be said that the Mahāyāna and its buddhahood are the sole vehicle, in the sense that there are no others that surpass them; all supremacy is exhausted there alone.[58]

Thus, with a range of rhetorical figures, including hyperbole, synecdoche, and metonym, the possible referents of the term "one vehicle" are accounted for, if not explained away, and the doctrine of three vehicles can be upheld. The seven referents are all in some sense metaphoric, with metaphor taken to mean a figure of speech in which a name is transferred to an object to which that term is *not* applicable, with the term retaining reference both to its original meaning and to the object for which is stands;[59] the Yogācāra commentators all conclude their discussions of the stanza by saying that the statements in the sūtras that there is but one vehicle are not definitive *(nītārtha)* but are provisional and subject to interpretation *(neyārtha),* and are not to be taken to mean that there are not three vehicles. Rather, the Buddha had something else—one of these seven things—in mind when he used the term *"ekayāna."*

However, for a statement to be judged provisional, it is not enough that there be some unspoken referent in the Buddha's mind; he must also have a purpose in making a statement that is inaccurate.[60] The *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* provides two such reasons: "In order to lead some, in order to hold others, the complete buddhas teach one vehicle to the uncertain."[61] Those to be led are śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas of

indefinite lineage, that is, those who have entered the Hīnayāna path but who are not predestined to complete it. They are told by the Buddha that there is but one vehicle, which begins with the practices of śrāvakas and then proceeds to the practices of bodhisattvas. Those to be held are bodhisattvas of indefinite lineage, who are in danger of forsaking the Mahāyāna because they become discouraged about saṃsāra when they see that sentient beings irrationally do each other harm. To keep them from despondently turning to the Hīnayāna, the Buddha tells them that there is but one vehicle, the Mahāyāna, that there is no other alternative.[62]

According to Haribhadra, it was Āryāsaṅga and his followers who held that there is a variety of vehicles.[63] Before investigating the motivations for such a position, let us consider the opposing view, that of a single vehicle, well known from the *Lotus* and from passages such as this from the *Laṅkāvatāra:*

> The vehicle of the gods, the vehicle of Brahmā, and the vehicles of śrāvakas, tathāgatas, and *svajinas* (pratyekabuddhas); these are the vehicles I set forth. Until the mind is arisen, one does not encounter the vehicles. When the mind is transformed, there are no vehicles and no transmigrators. Even the explanation of the vehicles does not exist. I speak of one vehicle. In order to lead the childish, I speak of different vehicles.[64]

The dilemma of the commentator is to find a rationale for the unequivocal and definitive nature of his own interpretation of an authoritative text, and a rationale for judging the opposing interpretation heuristic, if not simply wrong. Finding sūtras to support one or the other position is not the problem. But to supplement citations from scripture *(āgama),* there must also be reasoned arguments *(yukti).* Nāgārjuna states in his *Niraupamyastava* (Hymn to the Peerless [Buddha]) that the vehicles are undifferentiated because the *dharmadhātu* is undifferentiated.[65] This entails the position which, according to Candrakīrti, Nāgārjuna also holds, that in order to achieve liberation from rebirth by any vehicle, one must gain cognition of emptiness.[66] A vehicle that does not provide a path for the realization of reality *(tathatā)* is not, then, an authentic vehicle for passing beyond mundane existence.[67] Tsong-kha-pa glosses Nāgārjuna to say that if reality is undifferentiated, it cannot be understood in a variety of ways. Based on this argument from symmetry, the existence of one vehicle—the means of gaining knowledge of the undifferentiated reality—is then (perhaps prematurely) inferred, with pronouncements about three vehicles being identified as yet another example of the Buddha's skillful methods, "to provide rest to those wearied on the road of mundane existence," as Nāgārjuna says in the *Bodhicittavivaraṇa* (Essay on the Mind of Enlightenment).[68]

A further tactic in the commentator's strategy is to attack the opponent's logic. The argument presented by Tsong-kha-pa calls into question the existence of quantifiable lineages. Noting that the capacities and interests of sentient beings are beyond enumeration, he argues that should one wish to posit the existence of vehicles on the basis of such factors, the number of vehicles would perforce be limitless. Furthermore, interests and capacities are inconstant. How, he asks, can one prove the existence of only three lineages based on a variety of interests and desires and, from that, derive three invariable lineages?[69]

On the question of lineage, Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa argues that the presence of the tathāgatagarbha in all sentient beings provides further proof of one final vehicle, that all sentient beings are endowed with the buddha-nature, and consequently that all are of the buddha lineage. Glossing *Ratnagotravibhāga* (Delineation of the Jewel Lineage) I.27, he provides three reasons why all sentient beings are endowed with the buddha-nature: the activities of the buddha affect all sentient beings, the reality *(tathatā)* of the stained minds of sentient beings and the reality of the stainless mind of the tathāgata are ontologically indivisible, and the buddha lineage exists in all sentient beings. The śāstra itself says:

> Because the body of the complete buddha creates emanations, because reality is indivisible, and because the lineage exists, all embodied beings are permanently endowed with the buddha-nature.[70]

The proponents of one vehicle cannot simply confine themselves to such theoretical issues. They are also confronted with an historical dilemma, namely, the accounts of the great arhats of the past who achieved liberation without recourse to the Great Vehicle. If they wish to uphold their position, the proponents of one vehicle must deny the existence of a nirvāṇa without remainder entered by the arhat, never to emerge. Following the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda,* they accept that arhats sever the continuum of birth and death brought about by karma and *kleśa,* but hold that they are subject to inconceivable birth and death. Indeed, the hallowed Abhidharma categories of the knowledge of non-production *(anutpādajñāna)* and the knowledge of extinction *(kṣayajñāna)* are declared to be themselves subject to interpretation *(neyārtha).*[71]

Having denied the ultimacy of the Hīnayāna goal, the paths of śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas can be assimilated as yet another instance of the Buddha's *upāya;* as the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda* says, "This so-called *parinirvāṇa* is a method of the tathāgatas."[72] Indeed, it is argued that it is simply unseemly to think that the buddhas, knowing the supremacy of the Mahāyāna, would in the final analysis teach anything else. Thus it is claimed that there is but one vehicle because it is unthinkable that there be three. The *Satyakaparivartta* (Chapter on the True Ones) says:

> Mañjuśrī, if the Tathāgata taught the Mahāyāna to some and taught the śrāvakayāna and pratyekabuddhayāna to others, the mind of the Tathāgata would be most impure, he would be guilty of favoritism, his great compassion would be meager, he would be discriminatory, and would be a teacher who kept the dharma secret.[73]

But even if the nirvāṇa of the arhats is merely a contrivance of the compassionate Buddha, the Mahāyāna must provide some explanation of their attainment. To wit, arhats abandon the afflictions of the three realms and consequently are not born there. Instead, they take birth in a pure land in a body of samādhi in the middle of a lotus and abide in this uncontaminated realm *(anāsravadhātu)* for many aeons until they are roused from their samādhi by buddhas, who exhort them to enter the Mahāyāna.[74] In his *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* Haribhadra cites stanzas 45–47 of Candrakīrti's *Triśaraṇasaptati* (Seventy Stanzas on the Triple Refuge) on this point, where the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha arhats are described:

> Having attained the two types of enlightenment, those who are frightened by mundane existence rejoice in the cessation of life [and] think that they have attained nirvāṇa. They lack nirvāṇa. Yet they are not born in the three realms of existence; they abide in the uncontaminated sphere. Later, they are roused by the buddhas to abandon the unafflicted ignorance. They amass the collections of enlightenment and become leaders of the world.[75]

But that will take some time, as we shall shortly see.

Just as the proponents of three vehicles had to account for those sūtras which unequivocally declared that there is but one vehicle, so the proponents of one final vehicle must explain away those sūtras that speak of three vehicles (the very texts on the basis of which Asaṅga and his followers argued that there are three final vehicles). Here again, *upāya* is called upon for the answer. According to Tsong-kha-pa's disciple Rgyal-tshab, the Buddha taught that there are three final vehicles out of his compassionate concern for those disciples of the Mahāyāna lineage who are temporarily incapable of understanding the profound teaching. The profound path is, of course, the Mādhyamika, and those disciples for whom it is temporarily unsuitable are the Yogācārins. Such was the Buddha's intention. What he had in mind when he spoke of three vehicles was simply that disciples must occasionally be led along various paths because they differ in their interests and capacities. His purpose in teaching three vehicles was to care for those who must be led along the Mahāyāna path without denying the true existence of the lack of a difference of entity between consciousnesses and their objects. Put less technically, the Buddha, recognizing that certain bodhisattvas were temporarily incapable both of understanding the most profound empti-

ness and of understanding that there is but one vehicle, skillfully explained to them that emptiness means that there are no objects which are not of the nature of consciousness, and that this emptiness is ultimately real. He also taught these dull-witted bodhisattvas that there are three vehicles.

Here again, Rgyal-tshab refers to the Yogācārins, who, according to the Dge-lugs-pa doxographies, hold that emptiness is the absence of objects that are not of the nature of consciousness, but also hold that that emptiness is truly established *(bden par grub pa)*. Rgyal-tshab links the assertions on the number of vehicles with assertions on the nature of reality, and ranks the Mādhyamikas above the Yogācārins in the hierarchy of *siddhāntas* on the basis of the Mādhyamikas' holding (1) that emptiness is itself empty of *svabhāva,* and (2) that there is but one final vehicle. Rgyal-tshab does not attempt to draw a connection between these two positions, but one might speculate that because the Mādhyamikas, or at least the Prāsaṅgikas, hold that all persons who achieve the enlightenment of a śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, or buddha do so by understanding the same reality (that is, emptiness), and because for the Mādhyamikas nothing, not even emptiness, is truly established, there cannot be three autonomous and separate vehicles.[76]

Tsong-kha-pa ends his section on the *yāna* controversy with a plea standard to the conclusion of the exposition of a difficult topic:

> Thus even the great charioteers appear to differ on the interpretability and definitiveness of the vehicles. Therefore, because this is something that those with clear minds should consider, I have merely planted a seed here; it should be known extensively from the oceanlike texts of the Mādhyamikas and Cittamātrins and from the statements of the supreme scholar Kamalaśīla.[77]

Why did the problem of the number of vehicles arise, and why did the Yogācārins and the Mādhyamikas differ in their answers? The first question is perhaps more easily addressed than the second. The problem of the number of vehicles arose out of the question of authority. How was the Mahāyāna to deal with a tradition that was temporally prior to it, and that thus claimed the authority gained from proximity to the founder? To wrest away that authority, at least to its own satisfaction, the Mahāyāna needed to displace the earlier tradition, and it employed many weapons in the attempt, the most effective of which were the doctrines of *upāya* and *gotra* (lineage). More than simply a hermeneutical device to accommodate conflicting views, the idea that the Buddha taught different paths to different persons was employed to appropriate the power of discourse and to control those from whom it had been appropriated by consistently consigning them to the paths the Buddha taught to those incapable of comprehending the most sublime

of his teachings. Such persons were designated as the lower members of the hierarchy, called the Hīnayāna, with *hīna* not simply meaning "lesser," as it is euphemistically translated, but "deficient," "defective," "faulty," "vile," "base," "excluded," "defeated." This status could then be made organic through *gotra*—yet another instance of the irruption of caste into Buddhist rhetoric.

The Mahāyāna's subordination of the earlier tradition in order to establish and maintain its own authority took two forms, reflected in the positions of three final vehicles and one final vehicle, in defense of which the commentators performed a wide range of machinations to impose a consistency on the sūtras that seems at times tyrannical in its veiled usurpation of sovereignty. For the proponents of three vehicles, hierarchy was maintained and the earlier tradition subordinated through concretizing the paths and the lineages; the Hīnayāna was inferior in its aspiration and in the content of its wisdom, comprehending only the selflessness of the person and unable to penetrate to the deeper understanding of emptiness that was the exclusive purview of the bodhisattva. The proponents of one final vehicle took another tack, subjugating the earlier tradition through subsumption, going so far as to deny the existence of *parinirvāṇa,* and demoting the ultimate attainment of the arhat to a detour on the path. Rather than keeping the Hīnayāna wholly external, they sought domination through the appropriation of origin: it was the Buddha's intention that all eventually join the Mahāyāna path and understand the sole reality of emptiness, without which liberation is impossible.

Thus, while the Yogācāra employed lineage to maintain superiority, the Mādhyamika rejected lineage toward the same end. Their strategy was to conflate all paths into the Mahāyāna. It is tempting to ascribe the Mādhyamika's integrating view of vehicles and fluid view of lineages to the totalizing power of emptiness. But it is nonetheless crucial to note that the Hīnayāna does not disappear for the Mādhyamika; even here, Mary Douglas' dirt does not lose its identity. This is because without the Hīnayāna there can be no Mahāyāna, without the inferior member there can be no superiority. The Hīnayāna functions for the Mahāyāna as the Other in terms of which it defines itself; the Mahāyāna constructs its identity through rejection of the Hīnayāna.

It has been observed that differentiation is dependent on disgust, but that this disgust is always ambivalent, being accompanied by desire, a nostalgia for the Other that has apparently been expelled.[78] Thus the śrāvaka is often portrayed in the Mahāyāna sūtras with a certain affection. We need think only of Śāriputra in the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (Teaching of Vimalakīrti). Yet our discussion thus far has been about the Indian strategies (unconscious though they may have been) of dealing with the Hīnayāna in an historical context where there were indeed adherents

and defenders of the śrāvakayāna. How do we account for the persistence of concern with śrāvakas in Tibetan Buddhist literature, for the long and extensive study of the structure of the Hīnayāna path in a land where there were no śrāvakas to be found, at least none of the card-carrying variety? This fascination with the śrāvakayāna cannot be seen as a further case of the Tibetans aping Indian Buddhism, an argument burdened beyond usefulness. Rather, the need to study the śrāvaka path in Tibet (and the fascination with the lohan in China?) can be attributed, at least in part, to the role of the śrāvaka as the imaginary Other. As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White note in another context:

> The point is that the *exclusion* necessary to the formation of social identity at one level is simultaneously a *production* at the level of the Imaginary, and a production, what is more, of a complex hybrid fantasy emerging out of the very attempt to demarcate boundaries, to unite and purify the social collectivity.[79]

Part of that fantasy is played out, perhaps, in the penalty that the proponents of one vehicle imposed on the śrāvaka who follows the Hīnayāna path to its completion before turning to the Mahāyāna. There is a range of opinion as to how long it takes such an arhat to follow the bodhisattva path and become a buddha. The sinified Korean monk Yüan-ts'e (Wŏnch'ŭk, 613–696), one of Hsuan-tsang's chief disciples, makes the ostensibly sensible assertion, in his commentary on the *Saṃdhinirmocana,* that arhats who enter the Mahāyāna path do so at the eighth *bhūmi,* since they have destroyed the afflictive obstructions and now need only abandon the obstructions to omniscience.[80] Bhāvaviveka, in his *Tarkajvālā* (Blaze of Reasoning), seems to suggest that arhats begin the path at the first *bhūmi.*[81] But Tsong-kha-pa interprets a passage from Dharmamitra's commentary on Maitreyanātha's *Abhisamayālaṃkāra,* called the *Prasphuṭapadā* (Clear Words), so as to support the position that arhats enter the Mahāyāna at the very outset of the path—i.e., on the path of accumulation, which commences with the creation of *bodhicitta*—his point being that it is not the level of the arhat's understanding of selflessness that is in question but the arhat's motivation. The bodhisattva path begins with the creation of *bodhicitta,* the aspiration to become a buddha out of compassion for all sentient beings, and the creation of this aspiration marks the beginning of the path of accumulation. It is this aspiration, regardless of the understanding of selflessness, that serves as the motivating cause of the bodhisattva's long career.[82]

'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa points out a certain infelicity entailed by the assertion that the arhat enters the path at the first or eighth *bhūmi.* He recalls that Haribhadra, in his *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* explains that the bodhisattva spends one period of innumerable aeons on the paths of

accumulation and preparation, a second period between the first and seventh *bhūmis,* and the third period going from the eighth *bhūmi* to the attainment of buddhahood, and he also recalls that Vasubandhu says in the *Abhidharmakośa* that śrāvakas can with great effort become arhats in as little as three lifetimes. Consequently, he calculates that the śrāvaka who became an arhat and then entered the Mahāyāna path at the first *bhūmi,* for example, would take one period of innumerable aeons (minus three lifetimes) less to become a buddha than would a bodhisattva. This is clearly unacceptable.[83]

Hence the path of the arhat must be longer than that of the bodhisattva, which is commonly calculated at three periods of innumerable aeons, but the precise length of the addendum seems to be in question. In his *Munimatālaṃkāra* (Ornament of the Mind of the Sage), Abhayākaragupta puts forth the position that śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha arhats become fully enlightened after four periods of countless aeons, whereas a commentary to Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (Guide to the Deeds of Enlightenment) by one Dge-ba-lha (Kalyāṇadeva) takes a sterner view, holding that arhats who enter the Mahāyāna take forty periods of countless aeons more than bodhisattvas to become buddhas.[84]

Eventually, however, they will complete the path. Moreover, if there is but one vehicle that all beings will eventually be led to enter, then all will eventually achieve buddhahood and saṃsāra will end. Or will it?

## The End of the Path

> Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavan was dwelling at Sāvatthi in Jetavana monastery in Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. Then drew near Vaccha, the wandering ascetic, to where the Bhagavan was; and having drawn near, he greeted the Bhagavan; and having passed the compliments of friendship and civility, he sat down respectfully at one side. And seated respectfully at one side, Vaccha, the wandering ascetic, spoke to the Bhagavan as follows, "How is it, Gotama? Does Gotama hold that the world is eternal, and that this view alone is true, and every other false?" "Nay, Vaccha, I do not hold that the world is eternal and that this view alone is true, and every other false."[85]

Thus does the Buddha refuse to answer the first of fourteen questions (repeated in similar forms elsewhere in the Pāli canon) known as the *avyākata* (indeterminables), rendered felicitously by Henry Clark Warren as "questions which tend not to edification." Like all such questions, the Buddha informs Vaccha that the question of whether the world is eternal "is a jungle, a wilderness, a puppet-show, a writhing, and a fetter, and is coupled with misery, ruin, despair, and agony, and does not tend to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom, and nirvāṇa."[86] In short, a perfect topic for buddhological reflection.

Despite the Buddha's dismissal of the question in the Pāli canon, with the ascendancy of the Mahāyāna, the problem of the end of saṃsāra rises again.[87] The vow of the bodhisattva is sometimes construed according to the simile of the king who assumes the powers of a buddha and then leads all beings to enlightenment; sometimes according to the simile of the ferryman who arrives simultaneously with his passengers at the further shore; and sometimes according to the simile of the shepherd who follows his flock into the shelter of the pen and closes the gate behind him. But whether the vow takes the form of "Having become a buddha, I will lead all beings to enlightenment" or "I will not enter nirvāṇa until all beings have been freed from suffering," the question naturally arises as to whether this vow is but a noble boast or whether there is in fact a time when the round of birth and death will cease. Is there a time when the purpose of the Mahāyāna will be fulfilled, a Buddhist eschaton?

Some two millennia after the Buddha declined to answer Vaccha's question, Tsong-kha-pa took it up in his first major work, *Legs bshad gser phreng* (A Garland of Gold Eloquence), his commentary on Maitreyanātha's *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. Here he considers the third of the five divisions of the knowledge of the paths, called "pervasion" *(vyāpti),* where Subhūti's statement that he will admire even the arhats who create the aspiration to supreme enlightenment is glossed to mean that all sentient beings are pervaded by the buddha-nature. It is in this context that the question of the end of saṃsāra arises. Tsong-kha-pa reports that Haribhadra, in his *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* presents the positions of those who hold that saṃsāra is endless and those who hold that saṃsāra will end. Haribhadra writes:

> Some say, "The lineage of buddhas is beginningless [such that] when individual buddhas arise, countless sentient beings pass into final nirvāṇa. However, saṃsāra still is limitless because it is inexhaustible, like the sky. Even though it is impeded by mountains, the sky is utterly inexhaustible." [Others say,] "That which encounters its antidote appears to diminish.[88] If the antidote is greatly increased it will completely disappear, like stains on gold. If one actualizes the antidote, whose character is selflessness, saṃsāra also will disappear." By the power of a nature reason,[89] they assert that the continuum of saṃsāra is severed.[90]

Here we have two models of saṃsāra. In the first, saṃsāra is compared to the limitless sky which, although impinged upon by mountain ranges that seem to rise up on the horizon to violate its domain, can never be taken over by them. Similarly, even though the lineage of buddhas is without beginning (since buddhas have appeared throughout history to liberate innumerable sentient beings), buddhas are like the great mountains that rise and fall; they can never block the sky. Saṃsāra, like the sky, is a constant: it is nature and cannot be opposed. It is portrayed as

neither positive nor negative but as the unlimited setting, the context, of the processes of suffering and enlightenment.[91]

The other model is more familiar. It is the oppositional model of contagion and antidote, with saṃsāra identified as the malady brought on by the contagion. The disease diminishes as the antidote takes effect, and when the antidote comes to have full effect the disease disappears. Saṃsāra is the disease brought on by poisonous ignorance, its symptoms are birth and death, and emptiness is its antidote. The simile here is not of mountains and sky but of stains on gold, suggesting that through proper application of the counteragent stains are effaced, leaving behind a pure substance whose taints were superficial. It is significant that gold is chosen over some other shiny metal, in that gold can be stained but cannot rust. Whereas other metals lose their lustre to rust and are permanently corroded in the process, beneath the stains on gold there remains a purity that can be uncovered.

Haribhadra appears to side with those who hold that saṃsāra will end —an attractive position indeed. Let us consider some further arguments put forth to support it. Numerous proofs can be made by citing scripture. For example, in his *Munimatālaṃkāra,* Abhayākaragupta quotes the *Samādhirāja* (King of Samādhi), which unequivocally states, "All of these transmigrators, without exception, will become buddhas."[92] But as became clear in Tsong-kha-pa's description of the *yāna* controversy, Māra can cite scripture for his purpose.

The arguments based on reason for the end of saṃsāra all seem to pivot on Dharmakīrti's famous declaration at *Pramāṇavārttika* I.210, "The nature of the mind is clear light; the stains are adventitious." Like mud in a pond, grime on a jewel, encrustations on a shirt of mail, or stains on gold, the defilements that give rise to the cycle of birth, aging, sickness, and death are superficial, accidental, "added on" *(āgantu),* implying what might seem to be a surprisingly substantialist position for a Buddhist thinker—namely, that while the defilements are accidental the mind is substantial; that that substance is pure, clear, and undefiled; that the nature of consciousness persists after the defilements have been expunged; and that the mind is somehow more real than the defilements. If the defilements are adventitious, it follows that there must be a way to remove them to reveal the clear light of the mind. The separation of the accidental from the substantial takes place through the proper application of the antidote, and the Tathāgata is present to ensure that the ailing find that antidote.

Dharmakīrti states the argument in a slightly different form earlier in the *Pramāṇavārttika* (at I.145–148),[93] where he holds that all beings will become enlightened due to the following sequence of propositions. If the obstructions in the minds of sentient beings were permanent, they could not be abandoned, but that is not the case; the obstructions have a cause

and are therefore impermanent. Even though they are impermanent, if there were no way to abandon them, universal enlightenment would be impossible, but that is not the case; the way to destroy the obstructions is to cultivate wisdom, the antidote to the belief in self. Even though the antidote exists, if there were no one who knew of its existence, the enlightenment of all sentient beings would be impossible, but there is such a person, the omniscient Tathāgata. Even though he knows the method, if he did not teach it to others, it would be impossible for all sentient beings to become enlightened, but this is not the case; the Tathāgata sets forth the method unerringly out of his abundant mercy. Finally, even though he teaches the method, if his disciples did not seek the goal that he presented to them, there could be no enlightenment, but that also is not the case; they seek freedom from rebirth. Therefore, saṃsāra will end.[94]

This argument invokes many of the tenets, if not articles of faith, of Buddhist philosophy: most importantly, that the defilements are abandoned through the knowledge of selflessness and that the Buddha achieved such knowledge and persuasively taught the world how to gain it. Yet this argument, which has been read by the tradition as a logical progression, is in fact a series of hops of faith which together equal a great leap toward validation of the central trope of the Mahāyāna, that all sentient beings will be liberated from suffering.

The youthful Tsong-kha-pa was not seduced, and identified the gaps in the argument that he deemed unleapable:

> This proves that separation from faults, like desire, merely occurs in some minds. With regard to the question of whether saṃsāra ends, this certainly proves that individual sentient beings become enlightened. However, since it is not the case that something is certain to happen [simply] because it might happen, this does not serve as a proof [that saṃsāra will end]. Therefore, the final proof that saṃsāra has a terminus [would seem to be] that the stains are adventitious and that the nature of the mind is clear light, and that, consequently, if one encounters the appropriate conditions, it is fitting that the obstructions be abandoned and suitable that the antidote be produced. However, this alone cannot prove that saṃsāra will end, because it confuses the feasibility of the occurrence of an effect with the certainty of the occurrence of an effect. It is like [trying to] prove that a sprout will definitely grow because seeds exist.[95]

He goes on to consider an argument, derived from statements in various sūtras, that saṃsāra will be emptied. For example, it is said that the fifth of the five certainties of the *saṃbhogakāya* of a buddha is that it teaches the Mahāyāna to *āryabodhisattvas* until saṃsāra is emptied.[96] He writes:

> Furthermore, others hold that because each buddha and bodhisattva brings many sentient beings to nirvāṇa, saṃsāra becomes empty in [the

> sense that] that it[s population] diminishes and is not augmented, like a pile of grain [in which kernels are removed one at a time].[97] Those who hold this position are mistaken, because they have not demonstrated that [the number of] sentient beings is decreasing. In order to say that something is growing or shrinking [in number], one must have some definite measure [at the outset], but this is not the case with the realm of sentient beings, which is like the sky. With this meaning in mind, the *Saṃcayagāthā* [Condensed Verses of the Perfection of Wisdom, XXVIII.5] says, "This mechanism of ignorance is without extinction and without increase."[98] And the *Bhadracaryāpraṇidhāna* [Aspiration to the Deeds of Samantabhadra] says, "As long as it would take to reach the end of the sky, so it is with the end of all sentient beings." Therefore, the intention of the statement that all transmigrators will become enlightened is this: if they encounter the conditions, it is suitable that they become so. Asaṅga [in his commentary to the *Ratnagotravibhāga*] explains the statement from [the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda*] sūtra, "It is beginningless but it has an end," to mean that there is no difference among sentient beings in their capacity to become purified. It is similar here.[99]

Thus Tsong-kha-pa, who would become one of the most sophisticated and articulate expositors of the supremacy of the Mahāyāna, consistently resists the compulsion to ratify its most important claim, that it is the vehicle that will deliver all beings to the safe haven of buddhahood across the raging ocean of saṃsāra. Since saṃsāra is merely the environment created by the karma of the unenlightened, when the last sentient being has made port, the sea will suddenly evaporate and all conditioned existence will end.

But although Tsong-kha-pa rejects the claim that these arguments prove that saṃsāra will end, he does not immediately jump to the opposite conclusion, that saṃsāra is endless:

> The great scholars of more recent times have noted that the Bhagavan made statements to both [effects]: that saṃsāra ends and that saṃsāra has no end, and based on these [statements] the proponents of tenets wrote treatises explaining both that saṃsāra ends and that it does not end. There are proofs for both positions.[100]

Tsong-kha-pa makes no attempt to apply the categories of *neyārtha* and *nītārtha* (provisional versus definitive) to the sūtras that proclaim the end or endlessness of saṃsāra. But in apparent reference to the *avyākṛta,* he notes that when the Buddha was asked whether saṃsāra ends, he did not answer. Tsong-kha-pa's interpretation of this silence appears unique. He does not see it as a critique of reason and an anticipation of the Mādhyamika dialectic, as T. R. V. Murti does.[101] Nor does he feel, like Vasubandhu, that the Buddha could not answer affirmatively or negatively without being misunderstood: to say that saṃsāra is endless

would suggest that there is no liberation; to say that saṃsāra ends would suggest that individual effort is unimportant.[102]

Tsong-kha-pa even seems to disregard Nāgārjuna's interpretation. In the *Ratnāvalī* (String of Jewels) II.7–9, it is asked why the Buddha remained silent about the end of the world when he knew that the countless buddhas will indeed end it through leading beings to enlightenment. Nāgārjuna answers that the Buddha remained silent because the world is illusory; its production and disintegration do not exist.[103] Tsong-kha-pa also seems to ignore *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* 14 and Candrakīrti's commentary on *Madhyamakaśāstra* XXV.20, "It is not only because of the undifferentiability of saṃsāra from nirvāṇa that it is impossible to imagine its beginning or its end."[104] Rather, the Buddha's silence suggests to Tsong-kha-pa that he knew that saṃsāra would never end, almost as though he refrained from delivering that piece of bad news to spare the world further despair. But Tsong-kha-pa also acknowledges that silence is not a proof.

Yet Tsong-kha-pa finds proof for the endlessness of saṃsāra, and he finds it in an unlikely place, in an argument he calls "pleasant to uphold."[105] Among the myriad practices of the bodhisattva enumerated in the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* is the acquisition of the collections (*saṃbhāra-pratipatti,* listed at I.46–47), of which there are seventeen. The twelfth of these is the collection of wisdom *(jñānasaṃbhāra),* which the commentators, drawing on the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā,* explain as the bodhisattva's knowledge of the twenty emptinesses, the tenth of which is called "the emptiness of the beginningless and the endless" *(anavarāgraśūnyatā).*[106]

It is a commonplace of the Dge-lugs-pa view of Mādhyamika that, in order for there to be emptiness, there must be something which is empty. The substratum or basis of the emptiness of the beginningless and the endless—that which is beginninglessly and endlessly empty—is saṃsāra. Candrakīrti writes in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* (VI.194–195):

> Because saṃsāra has no beginning and has no end, it is called that which is without beginning and without end. This dreamlike existence neither comes nor goes. The very absence of that is referred to in the treatises as the emptiness of the beginningless and the endless.[107]

Thus Tsong-kha-pa concludes, almost parenthetically, that saṃsāra must be endless. The irony here should not be lost: saṃsāra cannot be emptied because of emptiness. For Tsong-kha-pa, emptiness is reality, and by knowing that reality one is liberated from suffering. Yet emptiness becomes implicated in the perpetuation of that which knowledge of it is said to destroy (i.e., saṃsāra). This could be read as another example of the persistence of the Other, and as the logical conclusion of the

doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda* (dependent origination), since it is precisely the proclamation of emptiness as the self-present reality of saṃsāra that ensures saṃsāra's endlessness. But emptiness also seems to function as both remedy and poison; the mantra that can be misused to which Nāgārjuna alludes at *Madhyamakaśāstra* XXIV.11.

It is Tsong-kha-pa's allusion to the logically rigorous necessity of saṃsāra that unleashes emptiness' other, somehow repressed, meaning —the meaning that must always resurface when a nonphilosopheme becomes a philosopheme—for along with its philosophic definition as the absence of own-being by the Śūnyavādins, *śūnya* means that which is unreal, vain, hollow, barren, desolate, empty (the very terms used to evoke saṃsāra). Emptiness comes to serve as a substitute for saṃsāra. The root cause of saṃsāra is said to be ignorance, which is the belief that things are not empty but full, brimming in their autonomy, their *svabhāva*. This ignorance is called a poison. Emptiness, which is offered as the panacea to the entire complex and hierarchy of ignorance and the defilements it engenders, and whose function is to annul saṃsāra, has in fact both that effect and its opposite: it displaces and multiplies saṃsāra, ensuring its presence. Because emptiness, the *dharmadhātu,* is immanent in saṃsāra, the end of saṃsāra can never be imminent.[108]

All of Tsong-kha-pa's major commentators reject his argument that saṃsāra is endless without, of course, mentioning the master by name. Before examining their rebuttals, we might consider what is at stake for the Mahāyāna exegete in the problem of the end of saṃsāra. This question is addressed by Tsong-kha-pa's disciple Rgyal-tshab, who poses the difficulties that attend both the assertion that all sentient beings will become buddhas and the assertion that they will not. He begins by pointing out how embarrassing it would be if saṃsāra did not end. The complete and perfect buddhas want to establish sentient beings in the position that they themselves have achieved, and they turn the wheel of doctrine by performing the twelve deeds of a buddha until saṃsāra is emptied. If all sentient beings were not to achieve buddhahood through those efforts, says Rgyal-tshab, the turning of the wheel of the dharma, the very teaching of Buddhism, would be fruitless. Even if sentient beings were to seek the mere pacification of the sufferings of saṃsāra (the goal of the Hīnayāna), the great compassion which is the defining characteristic of the Mahāyāna could not be fulfilled, and the Bhagavān himself would be guilty of the fault of secrecy and of the other four faults enumerated in the *Satyakaparivarttasūtra.*[109]

On the other hand, the attainment of the Hīnayāna goal might not be so bad: if all sentient beings were capable of putting an end to the sufferings of saṃsāra via the śrāvakayāna, Rgyal-tshab argues, they could easily become buddhas, because the existence of one final vehicle has been well established. To argue against this and say that there are some

sentient beings who will never achieve even the liberation of the Hīnayāna is to contradict Āryavimuktisena's proof that the Buddha's statement that there are such doomed beings is not to be taken literally.[110]

Rgyal-tshab goes on to imagine the practical difficulties that would be entailed if saṃsāra were to come to an end. He points out that if all beings attained buddhahood, then the last bodhisattvas would have very few beings for whose welfare they could strive, thereby rendering their concern for others trifling and insignificant (implying that the quality of compassion is a function of the quantity of its objects). He thus worries that it would be impossible for the last bodhisattvas to amass the collection of merit *(puṇyasaṃbhāra, bsod nams kyi tshogs)* essential to the achievement of buddhahood.

Rgyal-tshab also contemplates that moment when all sentient beings have become buddhas, a time that he describes not with joyous expectation but with anxiety, for then there would not be a single sentient being for the buddhas to benefit. Rather than declaring that the purpose of Buddhism will have finally been fulfilled, he concludes that the welfare of others, the raison d'etre of the Mahāyāna, would be eliminated and that all buddhas would fall into the extreme of peace, the scorned goal of the Hīnayāna path.[111]

These kinds of concerns must strike us as strange. Did the Buddha not say that the dharma was a raft to be set aside when one has reached the other shore? Should not Rgyal-tshab see Buddhism (with its persistent medical rhetoric) as something akin to the modern medical researcher seeking a cure for AIDS, who works tirelessly for the day when his or her skills are no longer required? If Buddhism has an eschaton, is it not the moment of its obsolescence? Such questions are based on a conception of Buddhism promoted by its apologists, both ancient and modern, that Buddhism is above all "practical," such that all Buddhist doctrine is the articulation of the experience of the meditator, ideally of the ur-meditator, the Buddha himself. But we cannot understand the question of the end of saṃsāra in such terms: whether or not saṃsāra is endless should be of no concern to the practitioner. The issue has more to do with the agenda of Buddhist scholasticism.

In pointing out the problems entailed by the realization of the Mahāyāna's goal (i.e., the enlightenment of all sentient beings), Rgyal-tshab underscores the symbiotic relationship between the buddhas and sentient beings, a relation to which Śāntideva alludes at *Bodhicaryāvatāra* VI.113, where he says that the bodhisattva's enlightenment is indebted equally to the buddhas and to sentient beings—to the buddhas for teaching the dharma, and to sentient beings for serving as the field for cultivating the bodhisattva's harvest of merit. But beyond that, Rgyal-tshab seems to think that enlightenment makes sense only if there are the unenlightened—yet another example of how the two members of a

hierarchy perform a mutually defining function: sentient beings are the Other that differentiates the category of the buddhas. What does it mean to be a buddha if there are no sentient beings? Rgyal-tshab's comments imply that there is Buddhism only as long as there is saṃsāra.

Rgyal-tshab thus rather tellingly points out that all positions on the question of the end of saṃsāra are somehow problematic, whether one holds that all sentient beings will become buddhas, that they will not become buddhas, that they will achieve liberation from rebirth, or that they will not achieve liberation from rebirth. His own answer is less interesting than the questions he raises. He offers a Mādhyamika elaboration of Dharmakīrti's argument outlined above. If the minds of sentient beings were not naturally pure, then one would have to assert that a truly established phenomenon existed among objects of knowledge. That is, the stains of the afflictions would be intrinsic to the mind, part of its very substance, its *svabhāva,* as the Mīmāṃsikas hold. However, if it can be proven with valid knowledge that the mind is naturally pure, then it can be shown that ignorance and its predispositions are adventitious.

It is obvious that here Rgyal-tshab understands purity to mean emptiness. To the extent that the attributes of all phenomena are merely conventional designations and, in that sense, accidental, the phenomena themselves are pure, in that their attributes, whether positive or negative, are not intrinsic to them. Rgyal-tshab goes on to say that if one concedes that the mind can be separated from the defilements but denies the possibility of creating an antidote in the mind that can destroy those defilements, then one must hold (1) that no method exists for destroying the defilements in the minds of sentient beings, (2) that the method exists but no one knows it, (3) that the method exists but it never occurs to anyone to seek it, (4) that although the desire to seek the method occurs, the person who knows the method is utterly lacking in mercy and does not teach it, or (5) that even though the method is taught and there are those who pursue it, they do not practice it sufficiently to bring about its effect.

Not surprisingly, Rgyal-tshab finds each of these options untenable. First, he argues that the method indeed exists: by cultivating the wisdom of selflessness, all defilements can be extinguished. Second, there is someone who knows this method because it is established by reasoning that the Teacher, out of concern for all sentient beings, fully cultivated the wisdom that understands selflessness. Third, it is not the case that no one seeks the method because, Rgyal-tshab says, there are no sentient beings who, when exhorted by the buddhas, do not seek high status (that is, a favorable rebirth). Even though they may temporarily not seek liberation from rebirth, they will soon become discouraged about

saṃsāra and seek nirvāṇa, because all sentient beings are endowed with the buddha-nature, and because the Buddha's compassionate wish to establish all sentient beings in the state of buddhahood never wanes.

Here Rgyal-tshab introduces a factor of soteric destiny that seems closer to Jōdo Shinshū than to Dge-lugs-pa doctrine, attributing to the buddhas the extraordinary ability to cause all sentient beings to turn away from the concerns of this life in hopes of a better future state, as well as the further ability eventually to bring each of them to the path, aided by their genetic propensity, the buddha-nature. Thus, Rgyal-tshab argues, one need not be concerned that the Buddha will not teach the path to those who seek it, because when sentient beings seek enlightenment, they find that the Buddha's mercy for all sentient beings is like that of a mother for her only child. That mercy never wavers and the Buddha never stops teaching the dharma. Finally, it is not the case that those who set out on the path will not complete it, because Asaṅga argues in his commentary to the *Ratnagotravibhāga* that the buddha-lineage can be severed only temporarily and cannot be annihilated.

Rgyal-tshab attempts, then, to demonstrate that the position that all sentient beings will not become buddhas cannot withstand reasoned analysis, and that if one holds that there are no sentient beings for whom buddhahood cannot occur, then one must hold that it is certain that all sentient beings will become buddhas. He is willing to concede that there will be no sentient beings, that this, indeed, is the end which all buddhas seek. Rgyal-tshab concludes unequivocally that saṃsāra will end, eschewing the qualification that the specific saṃsāras of individual sentient beings will end but that saṃsāra in general is endless.[112] Yet it is not evident that he has shaken Tsong-kha-pa's contention that all this proves only that it is possible for all sentient beings to become buddhas, not that it is certain that they will do so.

'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa also challenges Tsong-kha-pa, presenting essentially the same argument as Rgyal-tshab but adding two other points. He appropriates the seeds that Tsong-kha-pa used (to argue that the existence of a cause does not ensure the production of an effect) to comment on the statement in the *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda* that saṃsāra has no beginning but has an end. The causal nexus that produces a seed is beginningless, but the chain of causation which produced the seed and which would produce a sprout from that seed is seen to end when the causes for its continuance are absent; just as the end of a seed is observed when it is destroyed by fire, says 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, so saṃsāra is brought to an end by extinguishing karma and *kleśa*. But again, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's argument seems more pertinent to the enlightenment of individuals than to the end of saṃsāra, as the quotation he provides for support betrays. He cites Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka*

(Four Hundred) VIII.25, "Just as the end of a seed is seen [but] its beginning is not, birth does not occur because its cause is not complete."[113]

'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa also challenges Tsong-kha-pa's interpretation of the emptiness of the beginningless and the endless by examining two other emptinesses from the list of twenty, the third and the fifteenth. The third emptiness is that of both the internal and the external *(adhyātmabahirdhāśūnyatā).* The internal refers to the sense faculties *(indriya)* and the external refers to the objects of the senses. That which is both internal and external is the physical bases of the senses (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body)—internal to the extent that they are controlled by consciousness, and external to the extent that they are not the actual sense faculties (the subtle matter that is supported by the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body). These physical bases of the senses are empty, like all other phenomena; hence the emptiness of that which is both internal and external.[114]

The fifteenth emptiness is the emptiness of the unobservable *(anupalambhaśūnyatā),* whose referents are the three times (past, present, and future), which are unobservable, or perhaps unidentifiable, in isolation but which can be defined only in terms of one another.[115] 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa challenges the degree to which these referents are to be accepted literally, noting that it is not the case that the physical bases of the senses are both internal and external, nor that the past, present, and future cannot be observed.[116] His point is that this same literalness is misapplied to the tenth emptiness (that of the beginningless and endless); even if saṃsāra is beginningless, it is not really endless. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's attempt to discredit Tsong-kha-pa's argument by forcing a shift to metaphor is a desperate one, and evades the more important philosophical question of the relation of emptiness to that which is empty.[117] It is an example of the kind of pedantry of which Dge-lugs-pa scholastics are so often accused.

It is interesting to note that although all of Tsong-kha-pa's commentators claim that saṃsāra will end, none takes up his point that such an end could only occur if there were a finite number of sentient beings. Indeed, Tsong-kha-pa's commentators, the conservators of Dge-lugs-pa scholasticism, seem intent on preserving the ultimate fulfillment of the bodhisattva's promise at all costs, as if the efficacy of the path rested on its facticity, while Tsong-kha-pa resists the appeal of scripture to which his commentators succumb and subjects each argument to the light of reason, finding them all lacking but finding none a reason for despair.

The vow of the bodhisattva is a paradigm rather than a promise, and it is as a paradigm that it derives its meaning, underlying the way in which the Buddhist, as both performer and beneficiary of the bodhisatt-

va's deeds, makes sense of the world. But for the world to end, for saṃsāra to be emptied, would bring an all too predictable conclusion to the narrative of the Buddhist path, and would unemploy the myriad buddhas of the ten directions.

To learn that saṃsāra is endless is a case of *peripeteia* or peripety, a term that Aristotle uses in the *Poetics* to describe the reversal of an audience's expectations, an unexpected turn of events, a special shift in plot that all good tragedy must contain.[118] For Tsong-kha-pa to consider exhaustively all the views for and against an end to saṃsāra and conclude that the most compelling argument for its endlessness is to be found in its very antidote, in emptiness, not only confirms the need for the persistence of the Other—that there be that which is empty so that there can be emptiness—but is also a double case of peripety, "an unexpected yet logical shift in the events of the play."[119] This is so first because emptiness is the last vessel that we would expect to contain the reason for the endlessness of saṃsāra, and second because it provides an unexpected twist to our expectation about the bodhisattva path.

It is difficult to conceive of the question of the end of saṃsāra, of whether all sentient beings will eventually become buddhas, as a practical concern of the Buddhist. Even as a theoretical issue, the affirmation of the end of saṃsāra is little more than an expression of faith in the compassion of the buddhas and in the dedication of the bodhisattvas. But is it not better to conceive a path that takes a single being three periods of innumerable aeons to traverse not as normative but as narrative? It is as a narrative that Tsong-kha-pa's peripetic conclusion derives its power, playing on our confidence of the end so as to subvert it.[120] It is a subversion carried out with logic and illogic: with logic as Tsong-kha-pa resists the magnetic pull of the distant goal and its demand for fulfillment (if only in fantasy) and the push of the scholastic urge to control the end; with illogic as he allows emptiness to play out all its possibilities, even if this means affirming its Other.

It has been observed that apocalyptic thought belongs to rectilinear rather than cyclical views of the world.[121] Although it is a commonplace that the Buddhist view of time is cyclical, with cycles of the birth and death of individuals and cycles of evolution, devolution, and involution of universes, the graphic representation of the Buddhist path seems to be neither a straight line between two points nor a circle endlessly retracing itself but a cone, spiraling in smaller and smaller circles until it ends in a point—the *apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa,* the nirvāṇa without location—and then continuing from that point, to line, to plane. But this model pertains only to individual sentient beings, as Tsong-kha-pa points out. We see in his analysis of the question of the end of saṃsāra a resistance to the compulsion toward origin and end time, toward genesis and apocalypse, confirming the observation of the modern critic that "there

is a correlation between the sophistication and variety of our fictions and remoteness and doubtfulness about ends and origins."[122]

## Afterword

The title of this chapter plays on that of Freud's 1937 paper, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," in which the practical strategy of fixing a date for the termination of the Wolfman's analysis prompts reflections on the theoretical possibility of an end of analysis, of complete cure, that "by means of analysis it is possible to attain to complete psychical normality and to be sure that it will be maintained, the supposition being that all the patient's repressions have been lifted and every gap in his memory filled."[123] Freud identifies two sources of neuroses: excessively strong instincts, which are traced to the patient's archaic heritage, and trauma suffered at a time when the ego was insufficiently prepared to defend itself. Freud dismisses as optimistic the view that it is possible to resolve an instinctual conflict once and for all while also protecting against the chance of future conflict, concluding that if this goal be demanded of analysis, "we shall not shorten its duration whether as a means or an end."[124]

Of course, this is never an issue for the Buddhist scholastic, who sees the very function of the path as the destruction of the *kleśas* and the prevention of their recurrence. The enlightenment of the arhat is marked by this double knowledge *(kṣayajñāna* and *anutpādajñāna).* The fundamental claim of Buddhism is that it can bring suffering to an end; enlightenment is the termination of analysis. For Freud, the utter disappearance of instinctual demands is neither possible nor desirable. Despite these fundamental differences, the Buddhist view is what Freud would term "economic," to the extent that both the afflictions and their antidotes are invested with degrees of energy that are variously derived, but with the supposition, again contrary to Freud, that the greater power rests ultimately with the antidotal.

Hence, at the theoretical level of the Buddhist scholastic, there is no question that, for individual sentient beings, the path is terminable. But if we view all sentient beings as a whole—as the body sentient, a single analysand—the question is more complex. Those who would argue for an end of saṃsāra retain a particularistic perspective in which individual buddhas cause individual beings to create the specific antidotes for specific afflictions until, at the end, the defilements of all beings have been destroyed. The goal of Buddhism would be, then, to effect the total destruction of all *kleśas.* To hypothesize such a state is to master conceptually the transformative process by projecting into the unimaginable future a final moment of control, the goal of Buddhist scholasticism. As we have observed, at this point Buddhism would end. In Freu-

dian terms we might view this Buddhism as a single organism, moving slowly but inexorably toward its own extinction but impeded, rather than aided, by the pleasure principle. For those who would argue for an end to saṃsāra, the causal model that pervades Buddhist doctrine extends into the realm of eschatology.

Tsong-kha-pa, as we have seen, disputes arguments for the end of saṃsāra not because he holds a dark view of the ubiquity of defilement but because, by recalling that there are limitless sentient beings, he introduces into the equation a factor of infinity. Beyond that, and perhaps more importantly, his observation of the consequence of the emptiness of the beginningless and the endless suggests that emptiness is not untainted by ambivalence. As much as one might like to discern an evolutionary movement from the "primitive" defilement/purification model to the "philosophical" ignorance/insight model, the language of impurity, separation, and abandonment remains resiliently persistent both in spite of and because of emptiness. It is due to this inherent ambivalence, in turn, that analysis, saṃsāra, and the path can not end; unlike Aristotle's peripety, Tsong-kha-pa's conclusion carries with it not closure but continuation. The very idea of a path bears the notion of arriving late. Tsong-kha-pa's reading of emptiness constantly defers that arrival, intimating, perhaps, that the end of the path is death.

## Notes

1. Adapted from Sydney H. Mellone, "Scholasticism," in James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908–1926), 11:240. For extensive studies of Christian scholasticism, see Martin Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode,* 2 vols. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1956); C. Spicq, *Esquisse d'une histoire de l'exégèse latine au Moyen-Age* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1944); Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse Médiévale: Les quatres sens de l'écriture,* 4 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1959–1964); and Jean Leclerq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God* (New York: 1961).

2. Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism,* trans. Sara Webb-Boin (Louvain: Peeters, 1988), 620.

3. This Derridean reading of the path is drawn from Richard Harland, *Superstructuralism* (London: Methuen, 1987), 148.

4. The Sanskrit is: *yā sārvajñatayā nayatyupaśamaṃ śāntaiṣiṇaḥ śrāvakān/ yā mārgajñatayā jagaddhitakṛtāṃ lokārthasaṃpādikā/ sarvākārāmidaṃ vadanti munayo viśvaṃ yayā saṃgatam/ tasyai śrāvakabodhisattvagaṇino buddhasya matre namaḥ//* See Th. Stcherbatsky and E. Obermiller, eds., *Abhisamayālankāra-prajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra,* Bibliotheca Buddhica XXIII (Osnabruck: Biblio Verlag, 1970), 1.

5. The other four texts are Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra,* Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika,* Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa,* and Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra.*

6. For a list of the twenty-one commentaries to the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra,* see E. Obermiller, "The Doctrine of Prajñāpāramitā as Exposed in the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* of Maitreya," *Acta Orientalia,* vol. XI, 1–2 (1932): 9–12.

7. *P* 5192. Sanskrit edition by Unrai Wogihara, *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā Prajñāpāramitāvyākhyā,* (Tokyo: Toyo bunko, 1973).

8. *P* 5191. Tibetan and reconstructed Sanskrit edition by R. S. Tripathi, *Abhisamayālaṃkāravṛtti-Sphuṭārtha,* Biblioteca Indo-Tibetica 2 (Varanasi: 1977).

9. In this chapter, I have used a reproduction of the 1897 Lhasa edition of Tsong-kha-pa's text. The full title of the work commonly referred to as *Legs bshad gser phreng* is *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan 'grel pa dang bcas pa'i rgya cher bshad pa i legs bshad gser phreng.* It occurs in the thirteenth volume *(tsa)* of the Lhasa edition of his collected works. See *The Collected Works (gsuṅ 'bum) of the Incomparable Lord Tsoṅ-kha-pa bLo-bzaṅ-grags-pa (Khams gsum chos kyis* [sic] *rgyal po shar tsong kha pa chen po'i gsung 'bum)* (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1978; hereafter *Tsong-kha-pa*). The five commentaries are: (1) *Mngon rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi tsa ba 'grel pa dang bcas pa'i rnam bshad snying po'i rgyan,* commonly referred to as *Rnam bshad snying po'i rgyan,* by Rgyal-tshab-dar-ma-rin-chen (1364–1432), blockprint in possession of the author, no date or place of publication provided; this work is traditionally considered to represent Tsong-kha-pa's mature positions on the topics of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra,* and is referred to hereafter as *Rgyal-tshab;* (2) *'Grel pa don gsal gyi rnam bshad rtogs dka'i snang ba,* by Mkhas-grub Dge-legs-dpal-bzang-po (1385–1438), in *The Collected Works (gsuṅ 'bum) of the Lord Mkhas grub rje dge legs dpal bzaṅ po,* vol. 1 *(ka)* (New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1980), 731ff., referred to hereafter as *Mkhas-grub;* (3) *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan 'grel pa dang bcas pa'i rnam bshad snying po rgyan gyi don legs par bshad pa yum don gsal ba'i sgron me,* commonly referred to as *Phar phyin spyi don,* by Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa (1478–1554), (Buxadour, India: Nang bstan shes rig 'dzin skyong slob gnyer khang, 1963; hereafter *Pan-chen*); (4) *Bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan 'grel pa dang bcas pa'i rnam bshad rnam pa gnyis kyi dka' ba'i gnas gsal bar byed pa legs bshad skal bzang klu dpang gi rol mtsho zhes bya ba skabs gnyis pa'i spyi don,* by Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1469–1546), (Bylakuppe, India: Serjey Dratsang, no date; hereafter *Rje-btsun-pa*); and (5) *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i mtha' dpyod nor bu'i 'phreng mdzes mkhas pa'i mkul rgyan las skabs gnyis pa,* better known as *Skabs gnyis pa'i mtha' dpyod,* by 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa (1648–1721), (Sarnath, India: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1965; hereafter *'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa*).

10. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, *Dngos po brgyad don bdun cu'i rnam bzhag legs par bshad pa mi pham bla ma'i zhal lung,* in *The Collected Works of 'Jam-dbyaṅs-bzad pa'i rdo-rje* (New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1972), 116.2–3.

11. *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* II.2 states, "Regarding the mode of the knowledge of the path, one should understand the śrāvaka path via the aspect of the four noble truths without apprehending [those truths to be real]." The Sanskrit is: *caturṇāmāryasatyānāmākārānupalambhataḥ/ śrāvakāṇāmayaṃ mārgo jñeyo mārgajñatānaye//* See Stcherbatsky and Obermiller, eds., *Abhisamayālankāra,* 11.

12. For a Dge-lugs-pa exposition of the doctrines of this "school," see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *A Study of Svātantrika* (Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion, 1987).

13. Dkon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po, *Sa lam gyi rnam bzhag theg gsum mdzes rgyan,* in *The Collected Works of dkon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po* (New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1972), 434.1–2.

14. This description follows Vasubandhu's commentary on *Abhidharmakośa* VI.26–28. See P. Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of Vasubandhu* (Patna: Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975), 350–353.

15. See Dkon-mchog-jigs-med-dbang-po, *Sa lam,* 434.2–435.1.

16. Ibid., 435.4–5.

17. Ibid., 437.4–439.2.

18. The Sanskrit is: *grāhyārthakalpanāhānād grāhakasyāprahāṇataḥ/ ādhārataśca vijñeyaḥ khaḍgamārgasya saṃgrahaḥ//* See Stcherbatsky and Obermiller, eds., *Abhisamayālankāra,* p. 12.

19. Dkon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po, *Sa lam,* 442.2–3.

20. Ibid., 457.2–4.

21. In the desire realm, there are ten afflictions for each of the four truths to be abandoned on the path of vision. These are the six root afflictions *(rtsa nyon, mūlakleśa),* the sixth of which, (wrong) view *(lta ba, dṛṣṭi),* has five varieties. The first five root afflictions are desire, anger, pride, ignorance, and doubt. The five varieties of wrong view are the view of the transitory collection *('jig tshogs la lta ba, satkāyadṛṣṭi),* extreme view *(mthar 'dzin pa'i lta ba, antagrāhadṛṣṭi),* holding a (wrong) view to be supreme *(lta ba mchog 'dzin, dṛṣṭiparāmarśa),* holding (wrong) ethics and conduct to be supreme *(tshul khrims dang brtul zhugs mchog 'dzin, śīlavrataparāmarśa),* and false view *(log lta, mithyādṛṣṭi).* Each of these ten afflictions occurs in the desire realm in connection with each of the four truths, resulting in forty artificial afflictive obstructions for the desire realm.

Anger *(khong khro, pratigha)* does not occur in the form and formless realms. Hence there are nine afflictions for each of the four truths in the two upper realms, or thirty-six afflictions for each. The 112 afflictive obstructions abandoned on the path of vision are the total of forty afflictions of the desire realm, thirty-six of the form realm, and thirty-six of the formless realm.

The number of 108 artificial obstructions to omniscience abandoned on the path of vision is arrived at by multiplying nine gradations of four forms of the conception of true existence *(bden 'dzin)* times the three realms. The four forms of the conception of true existence are the conception that things which bodhisattvas should pursue truly exist *('jug gzung rtog),* the conception that things which bodhisattvas should turn away from truly exist *(ldog gzung rtog),* the conception that the mind which conceives of the person to be substantially existent truly exists *(rdzas 'dzin rtog),* and the conception that the mind which conceives of the person to be imputedly existent truly exists *(btags 'dzin rtog).* Each of these has nine levels of strength, following the standard formula of the small of the small, intermediate of the small, through the great of the great, all thirty-six of which occur for each of the three realms, resulting in 108 artificial obstructions to omniscience to be abandoned on the path of vision.

It will be recalled that there are sixteen innate afflictive obstructions to be abandoned on the path of meditation. The first six, associated with the desire realm, are the root afflictions of desire, anger, pride, and ignorance, plus two forms of wrong view: the view of the transitory collection and extreme views. This seems to imply that doubt and the other forms of wrong view—that is, false view and the holding of wrong views and wrong systems of ethics to be supreme—are fully abandoned on the path of vision. Again, because anger is absent in the upper realms, there are five innate afflictions associated with the form and formless realms, resulting in sixteen innate afflictive obstructions abandoned by the bodhisattva over the course of the ten *bhūmis.*

Finally, there are 108 obstructions to omniscience abandoned on the path of meditation. These are the innate forms of the 108 artificial obstructions to omniscience that were abandoned on the path of vision. See Dkon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po, *Sa lam,* 457.2–458.4. The ability to compute all this prior to the invention of the electronic calculator is itself testimony to the Mahāyāna claim that bodhisattvas have sharper intellects than the adherents of the Hīnayāna.

22. In works like the *Lotus Sūtra,* the control of enlightenment rests not with

the scholastics but with the Buddha himself. The person of the Buddha is exalted to cosmic proportions in the sixteenth chapter of the *Lotus,* with the implied consequence that a path that he began in the inconceivable past can be equaled by others only in the inconceivable future, at a time known only to the Buddha, as evidenced by his prophecy *(vyākaraṇa).* The early Mahāyāna is thereby able to preserve the unique authority of the savior of the Saha world.

23. Blunt uses the term "voluntarist explanation" in his discussion of various theories that seek to account for the origin of the caste system in India. See E. A. H. Blunt, *The Caste System of Northern India with Special Reference to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), 11–12.

24. See, for example, *Saṃyuttanikāya* I.39 and *Majjhimanikāya* I.183. For a useful study of the Buddha's attitude toward caste, correcting the misconception that he was an unequivocal opponent of the caste system, see Y. Krishnan, "Buddhism and the Caste System," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies,* 9, no. 1 (1986): 71–83.

25. Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: An Essay on the Caste System* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), 47.

26. Ibid., p. 61.

27. The Sanskrit is: *prabhāsvaramidaṃ cittaṃ prakṛtyāgantavo malāḥ.* See Swami Dwarikadas Shastri, ed., *Pramāṇavārttika of Acharya Dharmakīrti* (Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1984), 73. I am following Shastri's ordering of the chapters here as follows: *pramāṇasiddhi* (chap. 1), *pratyakṣa* (chap. 2), *svārthānumāna* (chap. 3), *parārthānumāna* (chap. 4). The standard Tibetan ordering is 3-1-2-4. Dharmakīrti's statement that the defilements are adventitious *(āgantu)* stands in contrast to the Sarvāstivādin view of the defilements as having *svabhāva.* Dharmakīrti's view of the defilements as accidental to the mind has its antecedent at *Anguttaranikāya* I.5–11. For a masterful study of the theme of the luminosity of the mind, see David Seyfort Ruegg, *La théorie du Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra,* Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient (Paris, 1969), 411–454.

28. Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus,* pp. 59–60.

29. Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 51.

30. Both quotations in this passage are from Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966), 160–161.

31. Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus,* p. 49.

32. Douglas, *Purity and Danger,* p. 86.

33. Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon, 1969), 27.

34. Ibid., p. 32.

35. *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* II.1. The Sanskrit is: *syāmīkaraṇatā bhābhirdevānāṃ yogyatāṃ prati/ viṣayo niyato vyāptiḥ svabhāvastasya karma ca//* See Stcherbatsky and Obermiller, eds., *Abhisamayālankāra,* p. 11.

36. See Wogihara, ed., *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* pp. 129–130.

37. Ibid., pp. 131–133. For an analysis of the interpretation of this passage by Haribhadra and others, see Ruegg, *La théorie,* pp. 191–205.

38. In his essay entitled "The Discourse on Language," Michel Foucault speaks of a class of discourse that seems to comprise the Buddhist category of the sūtra, "those forms of discourse that lie at the origins of a certain number of new verbal acts, which are reiterated, transformed or discussed; in short, discourse which *is spoken* and remains spoken, indefinitely, beyond its formulation, and which remains to be spoken." See his *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 220.

39. Ibid., p. 221.

40. Both passages are cited in *Tsong-kha-pa* at 313a1-3. For an English translation of the prophecy concerning Śāriputra, see Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 53-56.

41. Cited in *Rje-btsun-pa,* 8b1.

42. Cited in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 313a5-6. The passage occurs in the seventh chapter of the sūtra. See Étienne Lamotte, ed. and trans., *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra: L'Explication des Mystères* (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1935), 74.

43. Cited in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 313a6-b1. See Lamotte, ed., *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra,* p. 74.

44. For a useful study of Dge-lugs-pa views on the various nirvanas, see Eugene Obermiller, *Nirvāṇa in Tibetan Buddhism* (Delhi: Classics India Publications, 1988).

45. *Tsong-kha-pa,* 313b3-5.

46. *Rje-btsun-pa,* 9a1.

47. *Tsong-kha-pa,* 313b6-314a1.

48. *Pan-chen,* 187a2-4.

49. *Tsong-kha-pa,* 314b2-3.

50. The verse and autocommentary occur in Louis de La Vallée Poussin, ed., *Madhyamakāvatāra par Candrakīrti,* Bibliotheca Buddhica IX (Osnabruck: Biblio Verlag, 1970), 402. The passage is cited in *Rje-btsun-pa* at 12b6-7. The last two lines as cited by Rje-btsun-pa differ from La Vallée Poussin's edition. Rje-btsun-pa's version reads: *khyod kyi theg pa 'di ni slob ma nye bar zhi ba'i tshul las yid/ sbyar zhing rnam par dben pa'ang blos sbyangs rnams la logs su gsungs//*

51. Cited in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 315a1-2.

52. Tsong-kha-pa, citing Asaṅga, describes the predispositions of ignorance *(ma rig pa'i bag chags kyi sa, āvidyāvāsanābhūmi)* as the subtle assumption of negative contaminated states which can be abandoned solely by a tathāgata. Like the scent of musk that remains in a vessel after the musk itself has been removed, these are instincts that persist even though the primary and secondary afflictions have been abandoned. See *Tsong-kha-pa,* 321b2-4. On the uncontaminated ignorance, see Padmanabh Jaini's chapter in this volume.

53. *Tsong-kha-pa,* 315a4-b4.

54. The Sanskrit is: *dharma nairātmyamuktīnaṃ tulyatvāt gotrabhedataḥ/ dravyāśayāpteśca nirmāṇātparyantādekayānatā//* See S. Bagchi, ed., *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra of Asaṅga,* Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, 13 (Darbhanga, India: The Mithila Institute, 1970), 68. The passage is cited in *Tsong-kha-pa* at 315b6.

55. The clearest and most complete commentary on this stanza is that of Sthiramati, which is drawn on in what follows. Vasubandhu's commentary is available in Sanskrit in S. Bagchi, ed., *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra;* his commentary on this stanza occurs on p. 68. Asvabhāva's commentary on the stanza is preserved in Tibetan in *P* 5530, vol. 108, 162.1.1-162.3.3. Sthiramati's commentary is preserved in Tibetan in *P* 5531, vol. 108, 287.1.6-288.3.1. See also Ruegg, *La théorie,* pp. 185-187.

56. *P* 5531, vol. 108, 287.2.4-8. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, at variance with the three Indian commentators, interprets the term "selflessness" to mean that all who achieve enlightenment are the same in that they understand selflessness. He makes this point in *'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa,* 15.8.

57. *P* 5531, vol. 108, 287.5.7-288.1.3. There are also cases of śrāvakas creating such doubles; Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa suggests that Śāriputra himself did so. See *Pan-chen,* 187b3.

58. *P* 5531, vol. 108, 288.1.3-7.

59. See Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 36.

60. On this topic, see D. Seyfort Ruegg, "Purport, Implicature and Presupposition: Sanskrit *abhiprāya* and Tibetan *dgoṅs pa/dgoṅ gźi* as Hermeneutical Concepts," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 13 (1985): 309-325; idem, "An Indian Source for the Tibetan Hermeneutical Term *dgoṅs gźi* 'Intentional Ground,' " *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 16 (1988): 1-4; and idem, "Allusiveness and Obliqueness in Buddhist Texts: *Saṃdhā, Saṃdhi, Saṃdhyā* and *Abhisaṃdhi,*" in Colette Caillat, ed., *Dialectes dans les Littératures Indo-Aryennes,* Publications de L'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, 55 (Paris: Edition-Diffusion de Boccard, 1989), 295-327. See also Michael Broido, "Abhiprāya and Intention in Tibetan Linguistics," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 12 (1984): 1-33, and Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 55-56.

61. *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* 11.54. The Sanskrit is: *ākarṣaṇārthamekeṣāmanyasandhāraṇāya ca/ deśitāniyatānāṃ hi sambuddhairekayānatā//* See S. Bagchi, ed., *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra,* p. 69.

62. *P* 5531, vol. 108, 288.2.3-288.3.1.

63. See Wogihara, ed., *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* p. 134.

64. Cited in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 316b4-6. For the Sanskrit and various Tibetan translations, see Ruegg, *La théorie,* p. 181, and n. 4 on that page.

65. The twenty-first stanza of the *Niraupamyastava* states: "Because the *dharmadhātu* is undifferentiated, the vehicles are without differentiation, Mighty One. You set forth the three vehicles in order that sentient beings would enter it." The Sanskrit is: *dharmadhātorsambhedādyānabhedo 'sti na prabho/ yānatritayamākhyātaṃ tvayā sattvāvatārataḥ//* For Sanskrit and Tibetan editions of the text, see Giuseppe Tucci, "Two Hymns of the Catuḥ-stava of Nāgārjuna," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1932): 308-325; this passage appears on p. 320. Tucci edited Amṛtākara's *Catuḥstavasamāsārtha,* but the section on the *Niraupamyastava* does not appear to include a commentary on this passage. See idem, *Minor Buddhist Texts: Parts I and II* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986), 235-246. Tsong-kha-pa cites *Niraupamyastava* 21 in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 317a2.

66. For a discussion of the positions of Bhāvaviveka, Candrakīrti, and Nāgārjuna on the question of whether knowledge of emptiness is necessary for liberation from rebirth, see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., "Do Śrāvakas Understand Emptiness?" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 16 (1988): 65-105.

67. Tsong-kha-pa makes this point in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 317a3. However, this interpretation would seem to entail the consequence that emptiness *(tathatā)* is not set forth in the śrāvakayāna, a position that Tsong-kha-pa argues elsewhere that Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti reject. See Lopez, "Do Śrāvakas Understand Emptiness?"

68. Cited in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 317a1. The closest *śloka* in the *Bodhicittavivaraṇa* to the passage cited by Tsong-kha-pa is 94, which says something quite different. It reads: *srid pa'i lam la skyo rnams la/ ngal so'i don du theg pa che/ 'byung ba'i ye she gnyis po yang/ gsungs pa yin te don dam min//* Lindtner's translation is: "Though it has been said, in order to comfort those who are disgusted with the way of life, that there are two [kinds] of knowledge *(jñāna)* arising [from] the Mahāyāna, [this, however] is not the ultimate meaning *(paramārtha).*" See Christian Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1982), 210-211. Tsong-kha-pa's version reads: *theg pa gnyis po dag kyang ni/ theg pa chen por 'byung pas na/ srid pa'i lam gyis dub rnams la/ ngal bso'i don de de nyid min//* This might be translated as: "Although there are two vehicles, they arise from the Mahāyāna. Therefore, the purpose is to comfort those wearied by the mundane path; [they] are not real."

69. *Tsong-kha-pa,* 317b2.

70. Cited in *Pan-chen,* 189a5.

71. *Tsong-kha-pa,* 317b5. Vasubandhu says at *Abhidharmakośa* VI.67: "The knowledges of extinguishment and non-production are enlightenment" *(anutpādakṣayajñāne bodhiḥ).* See Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam,* p. 382.

72. Cited in *Pan-chen,* 188a5.

73. Cited in *Rgyal-tshab,* 146b2–4. According to an oral communication from Lozang Jamspal, this sūtra is also known as the *Bodhisattvagocaropāyaviṣayavikūvaninirdeśa.*

74. Tsong-kha-pa cites the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* on this point: "Having attained a body of samādhi, they do not awaken for aeons. For example, a drunken person becomes sober if there is no wine. So they will attain my body, the knowledge of the *buddhadharma.*" The Tibetan, as it appears in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 318b2–3, reads: *ting nge 'dzin gyi lus thob nas/ bskal pa'i bar du mi sad do// dper na skyes bu myos pa ni/ myos 'gyur med na sangs pa ldar// de bzhin de dag nga yi sku/ sangs rgyas chos shes bya ba 'thob//* The last four lines differ markedly from the Peking edition's translation of the final stanza of the second chapter of the *Laṅkāvatāra,* which reads (at *P* 775, vol. 29 50.3.2): *ji ldar skyes bu ra ro ba/ chang dang bral nas sangs 'gyur bzhin/ de na de dag nga yi yang/ chos kyi sku ni thob par 'gyur//* A description of the arhats and their being roused from samādhi by the buddhas appears in the *Bodhicittavivaraṇa* (vv. 95–96), a work traditionally ascribed to Nāgārjuna. For an edition of the Tibetan and an English translation, see Lindtner, *Nagarjuniana,* pp. 212–213. This rehabilitation of the arhat recalls the harrowing of hell described in I Peter 3.19 and Dante's description in Canto IV.31–61 of the first circle of hell, wherein abide those who did not sin but who never were baptised, as well as those who, Virgil says (IV.37–39):

> Or, living before Christendom, their knees
> Paid not aright those tributes that belong
> To God; and I myself am one of these.

Christ descends into the first circle to save the patriarchs of the Old Testament (Adam, Abel, Noah, Moses, David, Abraham), leaving the pagan poets and philosophers to live forever without suffering, but also without hope.

75. Cited by Haribhadra at Wogihara, ed., *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* p. 134, and in *Tsong-kha-pa* at 318a2–3. The Sanskrit is: *labdhvā bodhidvayam hy ete bhavād uttrastamānasāḥ/ bhavanty āyuḥkṣayāt tuṣṭāḥ prāptanirvāṇasaṃjñinaḥ// na teṣām asti nirvāṇaṃ kiṃ tu janma bhavatraye/ dhātau na vidyate teṣāṃ te'pi tiṣṭhanty anāsrave// akliṣṭajñānahānāya paścād buddhaiḥ prabodhitāḥ/ saṃbhṛtya bodhisaṃbhārāṃs te'pi syur lokanāyakāḥ//* For a critical edition and annotated translation of the *Triśaraṇasaptati,* see Per K. Sorenson, *Candrakīrti Triśaraṇasaptati: The Septuagint on the Three Refuges* (Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Vien, 1986), 42–44. (Tsong-kha-pa's version differs slightly from the edition prepared by Sorenson.) A similar statement appears in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (II.58), which Tsong-kha-pa cites: "Those who abide in the path to peace think that they have attained nirvāṇa. Through being taught the reality of the doctrine, such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka,* they are turned away from the conception of self and, embracing method and wisdom, come to fruition in the supreme vehicle" (*Tsong-kha-pa,* 314b6–315a1).

76. Rgyal-tshab's discussion of the Buddha's purpose in teaching three final vehicles occurs in *Rgyal-tshab,* 147a3–6. For a discussion of the Dge-lugs-pa ranking of the Indian Buddhist schools, see Lopez, *A Study of Svātantrika,* pp. 153–159.

77. *Tsong-kha-pa,* 318a5–6. Kamalaśīla discusses the *yāna* controversy and argues for one final vehicle in his *Madhyamakālokā* (Illumination of the Middle Way). For further insight on the *ekayāna* question, consult Ruegg, *La théorie,* pp. 177–235; idem, "The *gotra, ekayāna,* and *tathāgatagarbha* theories of the Prajñāpāramitā according to Dharmamitra and Abhayākaragupta"; and Arnold Kunst, "Some Aspects of the *Ekayāna,*" the latter two found in Lewis Lancaster and Luis O. Gómez, ed., *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems* (Berkeley, Calif.: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1977), 283–326.

78. See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Desire* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 191.

79. Ibid., p. 193.

80. See *Tsong-kha-pa,* 318a6–b1.

81. Cited in *'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa,* 27.

82. This point is made in *Pan-chen,* 193a2–4.

83. See *'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa,* 25.

84. Ibid., 26.

85. *Majjhimanikāya* I.483. Translated by Henry Clark Warren in *Buddhism in Translations* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 123.

86. *Majjhimanikāya,* I.485–486; Warren, trans., *Buddhism,* p. 124.

87. The question in the Pāli canon is about the end of the world *(loka),* whereas Tsong-kha-pa takes up the question of the end of saṃsāra. Although it may not be appropriate to equate these two terms, Tsong-kha-pa appears to do so when he says (in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 319a5–6) that when the Buddha was asked whether saṃsāra will end, he did not answer. Tsong-kha-pa may be drawing on Vasubandhu's glosses of the *avyākṛta* in the ninth chapter of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya,* where he provides saṃsāra as a possible reading of *loka* in the context of the Buddha's refusal to respond to the four questions about the eternity of the world. See Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam,* pp. 470–471.

88. The argument concerning the relationship between an entity and its opposite seems to be drawn from *Pramāṇavārttika* III.121. See Shastri, ed., *Pramāṇavārttika,* p. 325; *Tsong-kha-pa,* 319b1–2; and Ruegg, *La théorie,* p. 215.

89. A "nature reason" *(svabhāvahetu)* is one in which the sign *(liṅga)* and the predicate of the probandum *(sādhyadharma)* are of the same nature. In the statement, "The subject, sound, is impermanent because of being produced," the reason, "being produced," is a correct nature sign because being produced and being impermanent are of the same nature. It is not immediately evident why the argument here is identified as a nature sign unless Haribhadra is simply indicating the relation endemic to a thing and its opposite, such that as one increases the other naturally and concomitantly decreases. On nature signs, see Ernst Steinkellner, "On the Interpretation of the Svabhāvahetuḥ," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 18 (1974): 117–129.

90. Cited in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 318b5–319a2. For the Sanskrit, see Wogihara, ed., *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* p. 575.

91. This model of saṃsāra evokes the event described at the end of the first chapter of the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa,* in which the Tathāgata touches the ground with his toe, transforming the world into a jeweled realm that resembles Anantaguṇaratnavyūha. He then explains to Śāriputra that the buddhafield is always pure, but that the Tathāgata causes it to appear to be contaminated in order to bring inferior beings to spiritual maturity.

92. Cited in *Tsong-kha-pa,* 319a4.

93. See Shastri, ed. *Pramāṇavārttika,* pp. 53–54.

94. Paraphrase provided in *'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa,* 18–19. The reference for

Dharmakīrti's argument occurs in the previous note. For the views of Bu-ston and Nya-dbon Kun-dga'-dpal on the question of the end of saṃsāra, see Ruegg, *La théorie,* pp. 207–213.

95. *Tsong-kha-pa,* 319b2–5.

96. See, for example, Mkhas-grub's statement in his *Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam.* For an edition and translation, see Ferdinand Lessing and Alex Wayman, *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978), 20–22.

97. This position is put forth and rejected in the *Mahāvastu.* See J. J. Jones, trans., *The Mahāvastu,* vol. 1 (London: Pali Text Society, 1973), 99.

98. The Sanskrit is: *na ca yantra kṣīyati avidya na cāsya vṛddhiḥ.* See Akira Yuyama, *Prajñā-pāramitā-ratna-guṇa-saṃcaya-gāthā* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 110. Yuyama's edition of the Tibetan (*'khrul 'khor zad pa med cing ma rig 'phel ba med,* p. 185) differs from Tsong-kha-pa's citation and is closer to the Sanskrit, which seems to say, "The mechanism is not extinguished and ignorance does not increase."

99. *Tsong-kha-pa,* 319b5–320a3.

100. Ibid., 319a4–5.

101. See T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1955), 36–54.

102. See Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam,* pp. 470–471.

103. Nāgārjuna, *Ratnāvalī,* in P. L. Vaidya, ed., *Madhyamakaśāstra of Nāgārjuna,* Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, 10 (Darbhanga, India: Mithila Institute, 1960), appendix 6, 301–302.

104. The Sanskrit is: *na ca kevalaṃ saṃsārasya nirvāṇenāviśiṣṭatvāt pūrvāparakoṭikalpanā na saṃbhavati//* See Vaidya, ed., *Madhyamakaśāstra,* p. 235.

105. *mtha' med kyi grub mtha' skyong bde bar bzhad pa ltar khas blang//* See *Tsong-kha-pa,* 319a6.

106. For Haribhadra's exposition of the twenty emptinesses, see Wogihara, ed., *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* pp. 95–96, and E. Obermiller, *Analysis of the Abhisamayālaṃkāra* (London: Luzac and Co., 1933), 126–141. See also *Tsong-kha-pa,* 255b3–266a2. For a translation of the *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* on the twenty emptinesses, see Edward Conze, trans., *The Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 144–148. On the sixteen emptinesses, see R. Pandeya, ed., *Madhyānta-Vibhāga-Śāstra* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971), 41, and G. Tucci, "Minor Sanskrit Texts on the Prajñāpāramitā: I. The Prajñāpāramitā-piṇḍārtha of Diṅnāga," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1947): 56–57, 60–61. On the eighteen emptinesses, see La Vallée Poussin, ed., *Madhyamakāvatāra par Candrakīrti,* pp. 302–338, and Lamotte, ed., *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra,* pp. 108–110. The most extensive exposition of the eighteen emptinesses occurs in Étienne Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grand Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna,* Tome IV (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1976), 2027–2151. Lamotte's discussion of the emptiness of the beginningless and the endless occurs at pp. 2094–2105.

107. For an edition of the Tibetan text, see La Vallée Poussin, *Madhyamakāvatāra par Candrakīrti,* pp. 313–314.

108. Emptiness, like Plato's *pharmakon,* is ambivalent because, as Derrida writes, "it constitutes the medium in which opposites are opposed, the movement and the play that links them among themselves, reverses them or makes them cross over into the other." See Jacques Derrida, *Disseminations,* trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 127. The preceding paragraph is indebted to Derrida's essay, "Plato's Pharmacy," from which this quotation is drawn.

109. See the passage cited on page 166 above.

110. *Rgyal-tshab,* 148a6–148b3.

111. Ibid., 148a4–5.

112. Rgyal-tshab's argument occurs in *Rgyal-tshab,* 151a3–152a4 and 152b3. For a French translation of Rgyal-tshab's entire section on controversies concerning the *ekayāna* and end of saṃsāra, see Ruegg, *La Théorie,* pp. 219–235.

113. *'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa,* 21. As is clear from *Rje-btsun-pa* at 16a5, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa is here either paraphrasing Sa-skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs gder* ("Although a seed has no beginning, when it is burned by fire its end is seen. Similarly, although saṃsāra is beginningless, its end is established by seeing selflessness") or he is drawing on Candrakīrti's commentary on *Catuḥśataka* VIII.25. For the Sanskrit and Tibetan of Āryadeva as well as the Sanskrit of Candrakīrti's commentary on the passage, see Karen Lang, *Āryadeva's Catuḥśataka* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1986), 86–87.

114. See Wogihara, ed., *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* p. 95, and Obermiller, *Analysis of the Abhisamayālaṃkāra,* pp. 127–128.

115. See Wogihara, ed., *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā,* p. 96, and Obermiller, *Analysis of the Abhisamayālaṃkāra,* pp. 137–138.

116. *'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa,* 20–21.

117. A more cogent disputation of Tsong-kha-pa's interpretation of the emptiness of the beginningless and the endless is made by Mkhas-grub-rje in his *Rtogs dka'i snang ba.* He cites Candrakīrti's statement on the emptiness of the beginningless and the endless ("This dreamlike existence neither comes nor goes. The very absence of that is referred to in the treatises as the emptiness of that which is beginningless and endless") and a sūtra which states, "One did not come here from a former life and does not go from here to the next." His point is that these statements are made from the ultimate perspective: saṃsāra has no ultimately or intrinsically existent beginning or end, just as the movement from one lifetime to another is unfindable under ultimate analysis. To read these passages literally would be to deny the existence of rebirth, even on the conventional level. Therefore Tsong-kha-pa is mistaken in finding in the emptiness of the beginningless and the endless a proof that saṃsāra will never end. Like the other interpreters, Mkhas-grub-rje argues that all sentient beings will become buddhas. See *Mkhas-grub,* 908.1–3.

118. On *peripeteia,* see Gerald F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 342–349.

119. Ibid., p. 344.

120. On peripety, Frank Kermode writes: "it is a disconfirmation followed by a consonance; the interest of having our expectations falsified is obviously related to our wish to reach the discovery or recognition by an unexpected and instructive route. The more daring the peripeteia, the more we feel that the work respects our sense of reality; and the more certainly we shall feel that the story under consideration is one of those which, by upsetting the ordinary balance of our naive expectations, is finding something out for us, something real." See his *The Sense of an Ending* (New York: Oxford University Press), 18.

121. Ibid., p. 5.

122. Ibid., p. 67.

123. Sigmund Freud, *Collected Papers,* vol. 5 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1952), 320.

124. Ibid., p. 325.

# The Illusion of Spiritual Progress: Remarks on Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Soteriology

MATTHEW KAPSTEIN

## I

The Tibetans have always been fond of origin tales. Every family, every religious tradition, and every branch of learning has its own story, beginning in the distant past and relating that past to the present. This chapter is in large measure concerned with one such tale, but before plunging into it, I will explain the origin of the chapter itself.

At some point in my own mythic past, I undertook to survey the extant corpus of historical and doctrinal literature belonging to a little known school of Tibetan Buddhism called the Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud, "the spiritual succession of the Shangs valley," which flourished during the twelfth through fourteenth centuries but then virtually disappeared as an independent sect.[1] The Shangs-pa school interested me for several reasons: the founder, Khyung-po Rnal-'byor ("the yogin of the Khyung clan"),[2] seemed to exemplify one of the grand themes of eleventh- to twelfth-century Tibetan Buddhism—namely, the attempt to resolve the tension between indigenous Tibetan and Indian sources of religious authority; his foremost teacher, Niguma, was said to have been the wife or sister of the famous siddha Nāropā, and thus the tradition accorded unique reverence to an Indian Buddhist woman; Niguma's teaching placed notable emphasis on the doctrines of apparition *(māyā, sgyu-ma)* and dream *(svapna, rmi-lam)*, and so promised to clarify some difficult topics in later Indian Buddhist theory and practice; and finally, despite the demise of the Shangs-pa as an independent sect, its teachings, or elements thereof, had resurfaced throughout the history of Tibetan Buddhism in remarkably varied settings: in the Rdzogs-chen ("Great Perfection") teachings of the Rnying-ma-pa master Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa (1308–1363),[3] in the Dge-lugs-pa rites of the protective deity Ṣaḍbhuja-Jñānanātha,[4] in the revelations of the bridge-building sage Thang-stong rgyal-po (fifteenth century),[5] in the medita-

tion teachings promoted by the brilliant sixteenth- and seventeenth-century exponents of the renegade (and eventually suppressed) Jo-nang-pa sect, and as one of the "eight great vehicles" *(shing-rta chen-po brgyad)* of Buddhist practice informing the eclectic *(ris-med)* tendencies represented above all by the massive literary production of 'Jam-dbyangs Mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po (1820–1892) and Kong-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas (1813–1899/1900).[6]

Through my study of the Shangs-pa literature, I discovered that Khyung-po's teacher Niguma had written a formal verse treatise on the path *(mārga, lam),* together with a detailed autocommentary.[7] If authentic,[8] these texts would be, so far as I know, the only extant systematic doctrinal treatises by an Indian woman, though I shan't discuss now the interesting historical questions that might be raised in connection with this topic.[9] In any event, the **Māyādhvakrama* (The Sequence of the Path of Apparition) and its autocommentary attempt to provide an account of the relationship between the categories developed in Buddhist scholastic philosophy for analyzing the path—the five paths, ten bodhisattva stations, thirty-seven factors allied to enlightenment, and so forth—and the experiences occurring to an adept specializing in the yogas of apparition, dream, and luminosity *(prabhāsvara, 'od-gsal)* as taught in the traditions of Vajrayāna Buddhism. The texts thus belong to a corpus of pre-twelfth-century Indo-Tibetan Buddhist literature that interestingly presages an important but doctrinally controversial development within later Tibetan Buddhism: namely, the emergence of what we might term "philosophical Vajrayāna"—that is, philosophical speculation inspired in part by tantric Buddhism, and so not entirely reducible to the philosophy of one or the other of the four normative schools recognized in later Indian Buddhist scholasticism. These considerations, combined with the discovery that the *Path of Apparition* had significantly influenced Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa, led me to edit it and to translate it, along with the autocommentary.

My work on the Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud path-literature accentuated, for me, some of the difficult questions surrounding the relationships between "the path" as a well-formed Buddhist discourse category and "soteriology" as a broad category in recent Western discourse about religion that is just beginning to be employed in Buddhist Studies. In the remainder of this chapter, I examine aspects of the tale of Shangs-pa origins and Niguma's *Path of Apparition* so as to disclose some of the possibilities presented by these two categories in relation to a particular Indo-Tibetan esoteric Buddhist tradition.

## II

For the Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud, the essential origin tale is the life of its founder, Khyung-po Rnal-'byor. His biography is an exceptionally dif-

ficult work to interpret historically. It is chronologically chaotic, and Khyung-po could hardly have been a contemporary of all the many great persons mentioned in connection with his career, unless in fact he lived the full 150 years that the tradition declares to have been his span. That he died around 1135 seems fairly certain, and many of the figures mentioned as his teachers belong to the last half of the eleventh century, though some were active much earlier.

Like other Tibetan religious biographies, Khyung-po's is called a *rnam-thar,* a term literally meaning "liberation," and so perhaps best translated in the present context as "soteriography." As this suggests, the central theme in such works is the subject's salvation.[10] *Rnam-thars* are thus illustrative of soteriological praxis and attainment, written usually by authors well versed in Buddhist doctrine. The culminating moment in Khyung-po's *rnam-thar* occurs when he meets Niguma, who is referred to ambiguously as Nāropā's "lady" *(lcam-mo).* Before learning of Niguma, Khyung-po had encountered, mastered, and finally abandoned the doctrines of a host of other teachers, Tibetan and Indian, Bon-po and Buddhist. Like much of the *rnam-thar,* the episode with which we are here concerned is related in the first person (though the text's colophon makes it perfectly clear that this is not an autobiography):

> Taking with me 500 ounces of gold, I wandered throughout India, and asked, "Who among the accomplished masters seems to have come face to face with the Buddha himself?" The *paṇḍitas* and *siddhas* concurred, "That would be Nāro Paṇḍita's lady *(lcam-mo),*[11] the *ḍākinī* of enlightened awareness called 'Niguma.' She abides in the three pure stations [i.e., the eighth through tenth bodhisattva stations, from which there is no falling back], and she has really requested instruction in dharma from Mahāvajradhara [the primordial Buddha of later tantric Buddhism] himself." Asking where she was residing just then, I was told that those of pure vision might meet her anywhere but that one of impure vision could search everywhere for her without success, for she dwelt upon the pure stations and her embodied form had become the stuff of rainbows. Nonetheless, I was told, she sometimes came to the dense grove of the Sosadvīpa charnel ground to preside over the communal feasting of the *ḍākinīs.* As soon as Niguma's name was first mentioned to me I began to weep: my faith was such that my hair stood on end. Therefore, then and there, I traveled to the Sosadvīpa charnel ground, to the dense grove that was there, and I chanted *namo buddhāya* ["hail to the Buddha!"] as I went along. Then, in the sky, at a height equivalent to that of seven palm trees, there appeared a *ḍākinī* of dark brown complexion, wearing ornaments of bone, holding a *khaṭvāṅga* [a ritual lance or trident piercing a skull] and *kapāla* [skull-cup], and appearing at once in various ways, as one and at the same time as many.[12] Seeing her dance, I thought, "This must be the *ḍākinī* Niguma," and I prostrated myself at her feet and circumambulated her many times. Then I begged her to confer upon me her genuine esoteric instructions.

"How do you know," she said, "that I'm no cannibalistic witch? When my circle arrives, you'll be our dinner! You'd better be moving; be quick!" But I persisted in my prostrations, circumambulations, and prayers to receive her instructions concerning secret mantras. She said, "For the secret mantras of the Mahāyāna, you'll need gold. If you've got gold, things may work out." I offered up my 500 ounces of gold, but she just tossed it all into the forest.[13] I thought, "Could she be a cannibalistic witch after all? She's not greedy for gold." At that instant, the *ḍākinī* glanced suddenly about the sky and her circle of innumerable *ḍākinīs* appeared from space itself. In a moment, some of them built a maṇḍala palace of three stories, some arrayed a maṇḍala of coloured sand, while some gathered together the provisions for the feast. Then, late during the night of the full moon, she conferred upon me the empowerment of the Body of Apparition *(māyākāya, sgyu-lus)* and that of the Dream. When the empowerment ceremony was completed, she said, "Little monk from Tibet, arise!" and in a moment, relying on the *ḍākinī*'s miraculous powers, we traveled three *yojanas* [about 24 miles]. There, in the sky above a mountain of gold, the *ḍākinīs* had assembled for the feast, dancing. From the four sides of the mountain four golden rivers descended, and I had to ask, "Where in India is such a mountain as this to be found, or is this too the *ḍākinī*'s magical creation?" To this she said:

These varied thoughts, full of passion and hate,
Stirring saṃsāra's ocean,
Are insubstantial; when you realize that
All's a golden isle, my son.
As for apparitional dharmas,
Like apparition contemplate them to be;
You'll become an apparitional buddha—
By the power of devotion it will come to be.

And she added, "Now I will bless you. Grasp your dreams!" Having grasped my dreams, I journeyed to the land of gods and demigods, where a gigantic demigod just swallowed me whole. The *ḍākinī* appeared in space and said, "Do not try to wake up, my son." It was at that time that she taught me the six doctrines in their entirety.[14]

To this account is appended an exhaustive list of the texts that Niguma transmitted to Khyung-po Rnal-'byor, which the latter brought back to Tibet, and which are preserved to this day in Tibetan translation.[15] Foremost among them are the *Path of Apparition* and its autocommentary.

Following his meeting with Niguma, Khyung-po Rnal-'byor continues for some time to travel in India, receiving further instruction from various masters, having renewed visionary experiences, and so forth. But his own liberation is from this point assured. Increasingly, he acts as a perfected master in his own right, bringing the fruits of the way to

worthy Tibetan disciples who congregate around him in large numbers.[16]

## III

Examining the tale of Khyung-po Rnal-'byor, it should be clear that there is no single soteriological theme that it seeks to advance to the exclusion of others. It is, rather, an intricately designed fabric whose several soteriological threads are tightly interwoven. By way of provisional analysis, I shall describe in brief four distinct types of soteriological themes that we may draw out of the account. To save words, I shall refer to them as "soteriologies," though this is somewhat inaccurate: they are, of course, dimensions of a single soteriology. I believe that the four types discussed here are prominent throughout Tibetan Buddhist "soteriographical" literature, and that there were definite socio-cultural reasons for emphasizing some such mix; but in the scope of this presentation it will not be possible to argue these points in full detail.

### *The Soteriology of the Shamanic Vision Quest*

Shamanic themes are well known in all Indian religious traditions, and Buddhism is no exception.[17] In Indian tantric religion, apparently shamanic elements seem particularly prominent. For this reason, it is always difficult for the student of Tibetan Buddhism to distinguish satisfactorily between Indian tantric motifs and those supposed to represent indigenous Tibetan shamanic traditions.[18] In any event, it seems certain that the powerfully shamanic tendencies of indigenous Tibetan religion would have encouraged the continuation, assimilation, and accentuation of related aspects of Indian religion as they were introduced into Tibet.

It has sometimes been maintained that the shamanic vision quest, an especially prominent element in North American Indian traditions, is less emphasized in Asiatic shamanism. Although this assumption is perhaps misleading, it does seem that, among the apparently shamanic motifs found in Indian Buddhism, the vision quest is not notably important.[19] Only one Indian Buddhist text that I know of can be said to turn unambiguously throughout on the vision quest theme—namely, the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra,* the great saga of Sudhana's wanderings throughout India in search of Maitreya. Several of the tales of the *mahāsiddhas* of the Vajrayāna tradition also describe vision quests, as do a number of *avadānas,* though this is by no means the dominant element in these episodes.[20] Whereas some would hold that the story of the Buddha's own renunciation and search for enlightenment conforms to a vision-quest paradigm, I would argue that the highly rationalized nature of that account reveals it to be a remarkably deviant example at best.[21]

It is, rather, in the Central and East Asian literature of Buddhist pilgrimage that we find the elevation of the vision quest to the point that it becomes virtually coextensive with Buddhist path.[22] In the case of Tibet, where Buddhism was always faced with the challenge of having to coerce indigenous spiritual powers, it seems certain that the *bla-ma*—the Buddhist guru—had to reveal his mastery of the shaman's traditional domains in order to establish his own authority.[23] This is suggested even by the term *"bla-ma"*: at once the superior (i.e., preceptor) of the Indian religious tradition, he is equally the controlling source, *ma,* of the *bla,* the primordial energies sustaining the soul's vitality.[24] Thus in the Tibetan soteriography, it is essential that the subject's religious authority be authenticated in two traditions simultaneously. Several motifs are relied on to achieve this: success in the vision quest; displays of magical power and curative ability; the subjugation of fierce chthonic divinities. In Khyung-po Rnal-'byor's *rnam-thar,* all of these are in evidence.[25]

The object of Khyung-po's search is "one who has come face to face with the Buddha himself," and that search culminates in a realm of vision and dream with his meeting Niguma, a woman whose "embodied form had become the stuff of rainbows" and who could thus be found only by "those of pure vision." Their meeting takes place in a charnel ground, which is transcended in a magical flight to a golden mountain. Niguma is depicted as dancing and has innumerable female followers who feast and join in her dance. She threatens cannibalism and imparts her full teaching only when Khyung-po has been swallowed by an asura in a dream. If the book hadn't been written 850 years ago, you'd think that the authors were getting their material right out of Mircea Eliade.[26]

In short, despite the fact that many of the motifs just mentioned run throughout the literature of Indic esoteric Buddhism, and so cannot be attributed to Tibetan shamanism in particular, their superabundance in the culminating moments of a pilgrim's quest must be seen above all as authenticating the hero's attainment of a shaman's salvation, through power won from a woman during a dream-flight on a magical mountain of gold.

### *The Soteriology of the Guru's Grace*

Indian Buddhism often seems to embody a highly rationalized soteriology in which the possibility of salvation by grace is systematically minimized. In devotional Mahāyāna and in Vajrayāna Buddhism, however, soteriological efficacy is attributed to the grace of a buddha or one's guru, although salvation through grace alone seems not to have been a possibility seriously countenanced by Indian Buddhists.[27] The

inch given to grace in Indian Buddhism became, of course, the proverbial mile in both East Asia and Tibet, being most powerfully manifest in the former in the various Pure Land schools, and in the latter in the emergence of the distinctively Tibetan institution sometimes called "Lamaism," at least when this term is used (as I believe it should be) to describe a type of social-cum-religious institution rather than a body of religious belief.[28]

In the quasi-theistic milieu of late Indian Buddhism, which was carried over into Tibet, the ultimate source of saving grace was the Buddha, and above all the Buddha embodying the power of the tantric preceptor, namely, Buddha Vajradhara. The closer one's ties to Vajradhara, the more powerfully one may receive the living blessing of the tantras' message, through which one's liberation in this life and body may be secured. So it is that Khyung-po Rnal-'byor is not content to search in India for teachings that can ultimately be traced back to the Buddha, but is determined to meet one who has been the direct beneficiary of Vajradhara's blessing. Realizing that he has now heard of such a being, Khyung-po feels no ordinary faith but weeps and experiences horripilation. It is expressly through Niguma's blessing *(byin-gyis brlabs)* that he is able to grasp his dreams and so receive the transmission of the six yogas. It will be easier to examine this in greater detail in the next section, on yogic soteriology, for these two threads are here very tightly intertwined.[29]

It is because of the immediacy of Khyung-po's connection with Vajradhara that the successors to his lineage in Tibet were able to claim that a special power and purity inhered in the blessing of their tradition. The Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud, however, remained somewhat anomalous among Tibetan Buddhist schools, in that it did not succeed in combining its claims to be a dispenser of Vajrayāna Buddhism's exceptional grace with extensive temporal power, this combination being generally characteristic of Lamaist institutions.

### *The Soteriology of Yogic Perfection*

If it is a sort of shamanic quest that brings Khyung-po to the feet of his guru, the grace of the guru is concretely embodied in the transmission to him of a particular body of salvific technique, mastery of which will bring about his spiritual perfection. The literature of yoga, Hindu and Buddhist, may involve elements resembling shamanism and also devotional religion, but in the final analysis yoga is always a sort of perfectibilism, which is clearly indicated by the characteristic term used to denote the successful adept, "siddha" (Tib. *grub-thob*), which means "accomplished, perfected, completed."

Khyung-po's personal attainment of perfection through yogic prac-

tice is made explicit in the later sections of the *rnam-thar.* As his initiation into a particular body of yogic lore, however, his meeting with Niguma describes imagistically the path of inner development he will take.[30]

Vajrayāna Buddhism employs several alternative classificatory schemes to set out the connections among the vast number of tantras, sādhanas, yogic disciplines, and so forth that collectively form its "canon."[31] The most popular of these schemes depends on a hierarchical ordering of tantras based on the structure of their respective initiatory rites *(abhiṣeka);* particular sādhanas or yogic practices may then be classified according to their relationships with the fundamental tantras. Usually four main hierarchical divisions are enumerated; the highest, comprising the tantras of unsurpassed yoga *(anuttarayogatantra),* is distinguished from the rest in part by teaching a system of practice that involves two distinct but ultimately unified sequences. The first of these, the sequence of creation *(utpattikrama),* depends on the visualized recreation of the world as maṇḍala and the accomplishment of rites, pacific and wrathful, through which the enlightenment of all who dwell within the maṇḍala-realm (ultimately all sentient beings) can be secured; the second, called the sequence of perfection *(niṣpannakrama),* focuses on the yogin's or yoginī's actualization of his or her own enlightenment through the forcible transmutation of mind-and-body into embodied enlightenment *(jinakāya, vajrakāya,* or *jñānakāya).*

In the later stages of the development of tantric Buddhism in India, it appears that masters of the Vajrayāna devoted increasing attention to the redaction of well-ordered summaries of the practices of the sequence of perfection. One of the most influential of these was the *Ṣaḍdharmopadeśa* of the siddha Tilopā, which was later transmitted to Tibet through his disciple Nāropā's Tibetan disciple Mar-pa Chos-kyi-blo-gros, whose school, the Mar-pa Bka'-brgyud, has many affinities with Khyung-po Rnal-'byor's Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud (so that they are sometimes inaccurately lumped together). It is Tilopā's teaching of the sequence of perfection that is often termed the *Six Doctrines of Nāropā.*[32] The teaching that Khyung-po received while in the belly of an asura in a dream is quite similar, and so is called the *Six Doctrines of Niguma (ni-gu chos-drug).* The two differ primarily in points of emphasis.[33]

The *Six Doctrines* consist of four through which to attain buddhahood in this very life and this very body, plus two fail-safe maneuvers, lest one expire before succeeding in the bid to achieve perfection here and now. These last two doctrines—transference of consciousness *('pho-ba)* and the precepts of the intermediate state *(bar-do)*—need not detain us, for in the present context we are concerned only with buddhahood achieved during this lifetime.

The first four doctrines are inner heat *(caṇḍālī, gtum-mo),* apparitional embodiment *(māyākāya, sgyu-lus),* dream *(svapna, rmi-lam),* and luminos-

ity *(prabhāsvara, 'od-gsal)*. The most striking difference between the traditions of Tilopā and Niguma is the relative emphasis in the former on inner heat and luminosity, and in the latter on apparition and dream. A later Tibetan adherent of Niguma's tradition summarizes the results of the successful practice of these four doctrines as follows:

> [By means of the inner heat] the warmth of well-being blazes naturally. By means of apparitional embodiment, attachment and aversion naturally dissolve. By means of the dream, the subtle bewilderment [underlying all bewilderment] is naturally cleansed. And by means of luminosity, ignorance is naturally dispelled.[34]

With this background in mind, we are in a position to see precisely how perfection in yogic discipline is revealed in the story of Khyung-po Rnal-'byor and Niguma: Khyung-po arrives in India so desiring the teachings of the Vajrayāna that he is prepared to purchase them with large sums of gold. Motivated by his desire but fearful that it will not be fulfilled (attachment and aversion), his initial encounter with Niguma is a reflection of his own conflicted condition: she appears at once in various ways, a bit sinister, possibly a cannibal—in short, in the threatening guise of a tantric dominatrix. Khyung-po's faith, however, keeps his emotional turbulence in check; it is this that demonstrates in part his worthiness as a disciple, as one who is to be granted *abhiṣeka,* whereby he experiences the transformation of the world into a maṇḍala, visibly instantiated in the golden mountain surrounded by four rivers of molten gold.

Thus we have been transported to a place of well-being and warmth, iconographically equivalent to the energy-center at the perineum from which the inner heat radiates upward. Khyung-po's attainment of the yogas of apparition and dream is then made explicit—the former through the two verses on apparition, in which the dissolution of attachment and aversion becomes manifest, and the latter when he is blessed to grasp his dreams. Note, too, that Niguma herself has been transformed in Khyung-po's vision; no longer the object of hope and fear, she appears not in many ways, but is altogether straightforward; no longer threatening, her maternal affection for her disciple ("my son") is undisguised. The fourth doctrine, luminosity, is revealed only implicitly, when, as the culmination of his discipleship, Khyung-po receives many texts, thus dispelling the final remnants of his ignorance in the blazing light of knowledge.

### *The Soteriology of Buddhist Insight*

Paradigmatically, Buddhist salvation has always been equated with liberating insight—in the case of the Buddha himself, this insight was his discovery of the four noble truths. The profoundly devotional poet of

the Mahāyāna, Śāntideva, insists that, with respect to the perfection of wisdom, all other perfections are instrumental.[35] The conception of enlightenment revealed in the *Dohās* of Saraha is similarly gnostic in character.[36] So, too, Khyung-po Rnal-'byor comes to possess saving knowledge of a peculiarly Buddhist character in the course of his encounter with Niguma.

The quintessential philosophical message of the Shangs-pa tradition is embodied in the two quatrains with which Niguma answers Khyung-po's query about the location of the golden mountain. Although we are not told explicitly that these verses are of signal importance for the tradition, we shall see below that there is ample reason for underscoring them in this context. Moreover, even if it were not a conclusion reinforced by the study of other texts belonging to the same tradition, we would be justified in assuming that the verses are somehow crucial because the text shifts from prose to verse at this point, thus recapitulating the pattern of the Indian tales of the siddhas, in which the siddha's unique realization is presented in a culminating verse.[37]

The gnostic character of Khyung-po's salvation is further brought to our attention when we are told that Niguma transmitted to him certain texts. Because two of these, the *Path of Apparition* and its commentary, summarize the full range of Buddhist path-doctrine, we are entitled to regard Khyung-po as liberated in the traditional terms of normative Buddhist scholasticism, that is, by virtue of his knowledge of the path and its fruit.

## IV

Having provided a rough-and-ready classification of the main soteriological themes informing the tale of Khyung-po Rnal-'byor's salvation, we can return to a question raised earlier: how is the description of the adept's actual salvation found here related to the normative doctrinal literature concerning the path? The presence in the Shangs-pa corpus of a treatise on the path, said to have been transmitted to Khyung-po by Niguma, allows us to examine this question in specific, concrete terms. That there is a genuine relationship to be studied here is signaled above all by the close convergence of the verses on apparition, recited by Niguma after Khyung-po expresses his amazement concerning the golden mountain, with verses I.3 and I.4 of the *Path of Apparition:*

> Apparition, from the beginning not substantially real, the beginningless elemental stratum,
> is itself the seed of all the elements of existence:
> it is the nucleus of enlightenment, and is good,
> and is well known as the "nucleus," or the "universal ground."

If one endowed with excellent faith, energy, and respect
meditatively cultivates the realization
that apparitional elements of existence are apparitional,
buddhahood will really be attained, apparitionally.

The autocommentary reveals that these verses paraphrase a passage from a now apparently lost tantra, the **Jñānābhyudaya (ye-shes mngon-par 'byung-ba),* which appears to have been one of Niguma's main sources of inspiration.[38] These verses provide, in essence, a summary of the three fundamental categories of ground *(āśraya),* path *(mārga),* and result *(phala).* They represent the epitome of Shangs-pa ontology, praxology, and buddhology: what there are are apparition-like dharmas; the essential element of practice is to cultivate the realization of their apparitionality; and the enlightenment that is attained is an apparition-like buddhahood. Apparition is thus the mediating category, pervading and so unifying the continuum of ground, path, and goal. It is not taken here, as elsewhere it sometimes is, as the negatively valued māyā from which one must flee in order to know a reality dualistically opposed to it. Rather, to be apparition-like is simply to be as beings are. Rejecting the common equation of māyā and evil deception, Niguma declares māyā to be good *(dge-ba,* Skt. *śubha* or *kuśala),* for it is by virtue of it that all beings may aspire to the attainment of buddhahood. This significantly characterizes Niguma's entire soteriology; she would have undoubtably approved of the general thrust of Paul Deussen's remarks on the soteriological significance of māyā:

> [The] three essential conditions of man's salvation—God, immortality, and freedom—are conceivable only if the universe is mere appearance and not reality, mere *māyā* and not the *ātman,* and they break down irretrievably should this empirical reality, wherein we live, be found to constitute the true essence of things.[39]

From early on, Buddhism was much concerned with the topography of spiritual paths: between here and nirvāṇa many new insights were to be gained, psychic skills to be mastered, traps to be avoided. In the Pāli *Nikāyas* and other relatively early scriptures, we find various enumerations of paths and aspects of the path, such as the famous teaching of the eightfold noble path or that of the stations *(bhūmi)* set forth in the *Mahāvastu.* Drawing on the alternative and sometimes conflicting enumerations found in canonical texts, the redactors of the several Abhidharma traditions sought to codify definitive lists of path-categories and to explicate, without apparent contradiction, the manner in which the alternative lists complemented or otherwise related to one another.

This process was continued in the Mahāyāna schools that drew most heavily on the Abhidharma traditions, such as the early "Yogācāra"

school, as revealed in the *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* and related works. Here two categories emerge as particularly important. The first of these, which is very old—its elements are all present in the *Nikāyas*—concerns the faculties that the practitioner must develop to guarantee his or her progress on the path: this list of thirty-seven factors of enlightenment pervades the literature of the Abhidharma. These are usually arranged in the same ascending order, beginning with the applications of mindfulness.[40]

A second main path-category elaborated in the Yogācāra Abhidharma is that of the five paths: those of provisions, application (or connection), seeing, cultivation, and no more learning (or the final path). These come to correspond directly to the thirty-seven factors allied with enlightenment—the first three groups, each of four factors, belonging to the path of provisions; the next two groups, of five factors each, to the path of connection; the seven limbs of enlightenment to the path of seeing; and the eightfold noble path to that of cultivation; the path of no more learning is identical to the achievement of the goal, nirvāṇa.

The sections of Niguma's *Path of Apparition* devoted to the path adopt the scheme just outlined in its entirety, preceded by an analysis of the category of the ground, and appending to it a detailed discussion of the characteristically Mahāyāna teaching of the ten bodhisattva stations. Clearly, the method of describing the path that is employed here represents the analytic-rational dimension of Buddhism; among the four soteriological themes sketched above, this represents the "soteriology of Buddhist insight." A complete outline of Niguma's treatise and its commentary, despite some highly interesting variants with respect to certain particular categories, conforms to a pattern well known to students of Indo-Tibetan scholasticism:[41]

I. Ground *(āśraya)*

II–VI. Path *(mārga)*

II. Path of Provisions *(sambhāramārga)*
- 1–4. Four applications of mindfulness *(smṛtyupasthāna)*
  - 1. to body *(kāya-)*
  - 2. to sensation *(vedanā-)*
  - 3. to mind *(citta-)*
  - 4. to phenomena *(dharma-)*
- 5–8. Four genuine renunciations *(samyakprahāṇa)*
  - 5. renunciation of nonvirtues that have not yet developed *(anutpannākuśala)*
  - 6. renunciation of those that have developed *(utpannākuśala)*
  - 7. development of virtues that have not yet developed *(anutpannakuśala)*

8. retention of those that have developed *(utpannakuśala)*
9–12. Four supports for the miraculous *(ṛddhipāda)*
9. volitional concentration *(chandasamādhi)*
10. energetic concentration *(vīryasamādhi)*
11. mental concentration *(cittasamādhi)*
12. investigative concentration *(mīmāṃsāsamādhi)*[42]

III. Connecting Path (or Path of Application, *prayogamārga*)
13–17. Five faculties *(indriya)*
13. faith *(śraddhā)*
14. energetic application *(vīrya)*
15. mindfulness *(smṛti)*
16. concentration *(samādhi)*
17. insight *(prajñā)*
18–22. Five powers *(bala)* recapitulate the designations of 13–17.

IV. Path of Seeing *(darśanamārga)*
23–29. Seven limbs of enlightenment *(bodhyaṅga)*
23. mindfulness *(smṛti)*
24. analysis of phenomena *(dharmapravicaya)*
25. energetic application *(vīrya)*
26. delight *(prīti)*
27. fitness *(praśrabdhi)*
28. concentration *(samādhi)*
29. equanimity *(upekṣā)*

V. Path of Cultivation *(bhāvanāmārga)*
30–37. The Eightfold Noble Path *(āryāṣṭāṅgamārga)*
30. right view *(samyagdṛṣṭi)*
31. right attitude *(samyaksaṃkalpa)*
32. right speech *(samyagvāk)*
33. right parameters of action *(samyakkarmānta)*
34. right livelihood *(samyagājīva)*
35. right effort *(samyagvyāyāma)*
36. right mindfulness *(samyaksmṛti)*
37. right concentration *(samyaksamādhi)*

VI. Result = Path of No More Learning *(phala, aśaikṣamārga)*

VII. Ten Bodhisattva Stations *(bodhisattvabhūmi)*

VIII. Further Discussion of Buddhahood

We have already seen that Indo-Tibetan Buddhist soteriology cannot be reduced to the category of doctrinal insight alone. It is noteworthy,

then, that while adhering to a normative scholastic pattern of exposition, Niguma's *Path of Apparition* does attempt, in its particulars, to broaden its account to include soteriological motifs certainly not originating in the analytic Abhidharma traditions. This is apparent above all with respect to what I have called the soteriologies of the guru's grace and of yogic perfection. The former is evidenced in verses such as I.8 and I.9:

> The sequences of five paths and ten stations
> are traversed by the force of devotion.
> It is the supreme essence of the tantras' intention
> that one be not separate from the guru's presence.
>
> Thus, it is best to experience
> all things seen and heard
> as being of the nature of deity and guru.

It is essential that we distinguish this devotion *(bhakti)* carefully from the faith *(śraddhā)* enumerated above among, for example, the five forces and five powers, because although the Abhidharma traditions made room for faith as a faculty employed on the path, they did not regard it as the motive force governing progress on the path overall.[43] Niguma's assertion that "the five paths and ten stations are traversed by the force of devotion" must therefore be regarded as supplementing what was perceived to be a deficiency of the older scheme with respect to the actualities of Vajrayāna practice.

Nonetheless, the interpretation of Niguma's yogic teaching in terms of the abhidharmic path-categories is doubtless the main point of the text. The entire discussion of the path of seeing, given in the appendix, offers a sustained example in confirmation of this. It seems, then, that only the soteriology of the shamanic vision quest is not clearly represented. Does this offer further indirect support for our contention that this is preeminently an indigenous Tibetan contribution? Perhaps; but it is important to note that the text's emphasis on visionary experience (e.g., verses IV.14–19 in the appendix) suggests further possible extensions of the categories of the path, plausibly embracing the vision quest and similar phenomena.

The *Path of Apparition* thus illustrates the potential openness of the apparently rigid abhidharmic path-categories, and the possibility of generating a more comprehensive Buddhist soteriology on their basis. But we may yet wonder why Niguma chose to utilize these seemingly pedantic categories, quite foreign to freewheeling festivals on mountains of gold, at all. It will not do to suppose that she (or any other Māhāyānist, for that matter) ever regarded the path-categories as

representing "real" categories of being, in an ontologically ultimate sense. Nor can we dispense with the problem by supposing her work to be merely an elaborate rationalization of a deviant sectarian tradition, for we would thereby only restate it, now asking why and how the path-categories are invoked to rationalize that tradition. Having puzzled over this problem for some time, there is only one conclusion that seems reasonable to me: Niguma relied on the scholastic path-categories simply because they are the categories of Buddhist thought. She chose to play a Mahāyānist language game rather than any other, and delighted in that particular language game. The choice is by no means arbitrary: the path-categories, themselves illusory just because they are not "real" categories of being, mirror the phenomenology of apparition and dream that they are employed to express. "Is this *really* the eightfold path?" The question echoes as hollowly as did Khyung-po's plaintive query as to whether or not the golden mountain was in India.

We have wandered from the multiple soteriologies of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism to the scholastic analysis of the path, and back again. In Niguma's *Path of Apparition* the relationship between Buddhist scholasticism and the Vajrayāna is still perhaps an uneasy one, but it is a relationship that continued variously to progress outside of India, in the schools of Tibetan Buddhism and Bon, as also in Japanese Shingon. What I have indicated here is that, when we approach the point at which late Indian Buddhism intersects with a growing tradition in Tibet, we find the beginnings of a transformation in dogmatic soteriology, which reflects, in part, changing soteriological practices.[44]

# Appendix: Selections from Niguma's Māyādhvakrama (The Sequence of the Path of Apparition)

*Note:* Following are excerpts from Niguma's verse treatise on the path. The extant Tibetan text is composed in continuous seven-syllable lines, without marked chapter or verse breaks, and the prose autocommentary is similarly undivided, though its structure is very clear. For the convenience of contemporary readers, I have broken both works into eight parallel sections and have numbered "verses" and paragraphs according to logical rather than metrical breaks in the text. Selections from the first two sections and the complete text of the fourth section are found here. The autocommentary on section IV is also given in its entirety. I have supplied the italicized headings containing brief explan-

atory comments on the text. A complete outline of these texts is given above, pp. 204–205.

## I. *The Ground*

*The introductory obeisance:*

1. Homage to mind, in and of itself,
 that is primordially luminous by nature,
 and provides all that is yearned for,
 like the wish-fulfilling gem.

*Statement of purpose:*

2. To benefit others I shall expound
 *The Sequence of the Path of Apparition,*
 the spiritual essence of the ocean of Jinas,
 the heart of expressible meaning.

*Summary of the doctrines of ground, path and result:*

3. Apparition, from the beginning not substantially real, the beginningless elemental stratum,
 is itself the seed of all the elements of existence:
 it is the nucleus of enlightenment, and is good,
 and is well known as the "nucleus," or the "universal ground."

4. If one endowed with excellent faith, energy, and respect
 meditatively cultivates the realization
 that apparitional elements of existence are apparitional,
 buddhahood will really be attained, apparitionally.

*The primary subject matter:*

5. Therefore, hear me well, for well I shall explain,
 the five paths and ten spiritual stations.

*The ground according to the Vajrayāna:*

6. Whatever there is, whether animate or inanimate,
 everything that appears to the five senses,
 is all the Body of the deity, [the coalescence of] appearance and emptiness;
 and the Body of the deity is limitless apparition.

*The path according to the Vajrayāna:*

7. The learned should undertake to experience
 all factors that are allies of enlightenment
 as indivisible from the deity's Body and apparition.

8. The sequences of five paths and ten stations
 are traversed by the force of devotion.

It is the supreme essence of the tantras' intention
that one be not separate from the guru's presence.

9. Thus, it is best to experience
all things seen and heard
as being of the nature of deity and guru.

10. Shape, color, and the five poisons,
and the classes of being determined by karma are the Five Families.
Whatever appears is appearance and emptiness:
Creation, Consummation, Coalescence.

*The result according to the Vajrayāna:*

11. Where there is bliss, transparency, and nonconceptualization
is the natural arising of Trikāya.
Transparent and nonconceptual, it is the dual cognition
[of the abiding nature of reality and of the entire extension of phenomena].

## II. *The Path of Provisions*

*Definition of "path":*

1. Moreover, [the path] is called a path
because śamatha and vipaśyanā are conjoined,
and because [by it] one seeks to journey
to that which is unsurpassed.

## IV. *The Path of Seeing*

*Characteristic and definition of the Path of Seeing:*

1. At the last instant of the Ultimate Mundane Attainment
the nondiscursive pristine cognition of the Path of Seeing [is born]:
it is the natural arising of apparition
and is characterized as infallible.

2. It is the pristine cognition of the Path of Seeing,
because you see what was not seen before.

*The Seven Limbs of Enlightenment:*

3. The Seven Limbs of Enlightenment
are the characteristic mode of concentration on the Path of Seeing.

4. Not needing to be deliberately mindful of apparition,
which lies beyond the range of the intellect,
one sees the actual nature of things:
therefore, this is mindfulness, as a limb of perfect enlightenment.

5. The analysis of the elements of existence
as a limb [of perfect enlightenment],
[is the realization that] the discernible characteristics
of the wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate,
may not be established or apprehended with reference to apparitional elements of existence.

6. Because all perceptions are demolished
[in the realization of] apparition, free from all subjective grasping,
one strives without accepting or rejecting anything.
Therefore, this is energetic application, as a limb [of perfect enlightenment].

7. Regarding apparition,
about which there is nothing to prove or negate,
delight and unhappiness are demolished.
Therefore, having a disciplined mind, not engendering happiness about any conditions,
is delight, as a limb [of perfect enlightenment].

8. Training the mind with reference to all things,
not adhering to mental objects as objective points of reference,
because they are apparition, not substantially real,
is mental fitness, as a limb of [perfect] enlightenment.

9. And apparition itself is not substantially real:
following the realization in which the elements of existence are demolished,
one does not adhere to mind as an objective point of reference at all.
This is concentration as a limb of [perfect] enlightenment.

10. Apparition, not abiding anywhere,
neither supports, nor adheres, nor binds up.
To be unpreoccuppied with the elements of existence
is equanimity, as a limb of [perfect] enlightenment.

*The yogin's experience of the Path of Seeing:*

11. Having cultivated that mode of concentration,
then during the day, and halfway through the night, all things seen and heard
arise as apparition, not substantially real,
the limitless coalescence of appearance and emptiness.

12. As bubbles arise and dissolve in a pristine ocean,
so our bubbling thoughts exist nowhere but in the ocean of Reality.
Therefore, you must neither prove nor negate,
but establish a relaxed meditation.

13. At that time the mist of thoughts and feelings
becomes baseless, can no longer disturb you.
Having become certain and decisive,
you must practice without negation or affirmation.

14. By welding this with devotion, the Body of the deity—
transparent and nondiscursive, blissful and free from grasping, devoid of craving,
naturally arising, naturally liberated, uncompounded,
free from conceptualization, omniscient and luminous—
emerges, either during the interval between sleep and dream,
or when you seize the dream, or naturally arising.
It is the Sambhogakāya, [and endures] so long as you do not waver.

15. You intermingle day and night indivisibly,
and having unwaveringly experienced whatever appears
as being endowed with three wheels,[45]
you perform acts of worship and supplication.

16. Having thus attained mastery
of the emanation and transformation of dreams,
you practice the craft of apparition [with reference to everything that exists],
from the Buddha down to mere insects.

17. In this way the apparitional body
is revealed without qualification;
apparition, the Body of the deity, and Luminosity become indivisible;
and visionary clarity spreads forth.

*Marks of success on the Path of Seeing:*

18. Having completed the course of the "appearance of objects,"
you abandon the hundred and twelve things to be abandoned on the Path of Seeing;
attaining higher knowledge,
you become joyous; and awesome things become manifest.

19. The sign that the visionary clarity of apparition
has arisen [is this]:
during sleep, and at other times,
in even a single instant,
twelve [groups] of one hundred qualities of enlightenment [arise]:
you become absorbed in one hundred states of concentration;
and behold the faces of one hundred Buddhas;
attend the teachings of one hundred Buddhas;
and shake one hundred world-systems;

travel to one hundred Buddha-fields;
and fill one hundred realms with light;
bring about the spiritual maturation of one-hundred beings;
and open one hundred Dharma-doors;
live through one hundred aeons;
and penetrate one hundred, previous and subsequent;
you can divide bodily into one hundred emanations;
and with each body encircled
by a retinue of one hundred, you teach [the Dharma].

20. Because you are able to abandon even life
for the sake of the Dharma,
the objects of desire become allies [on the path].

21. You perfect the four kinds of generosity,
and practice the remaining [Perfections] as much as possible.

22. Attaining this station you become free of five fears:
fear of no livelihood, death,
the vicious states of existence, ill-repute, and saṃsāra.
Free from them, you abandon the dispositions [underlying those fears].

23. Thus, the realization arises that everything seen or heard is truthless apparition.

*The anticipation on the Path of Seeing of attaining the eighth station (from which there is no falling back), and the attainment of buddhahood on realizing the station called, in the Vajrayāna, "lotus-endowed" (padma-can):*

24. If the impure, bewildering idiosyncracies
of daytime and of the dream,
do not remain on the eighth station,
then what need be said of the Lotus-endowed?

25. Therefore, [when] various things appear
[within the field of] transparent and pristine sensory consciousness,
mental grasping does not set in,
[but you realize instead] that that is the indivisible coalescence of transparency and emptiness,
the natural manifestation of apparition, free from craving.

26. You realize the elements of dream
to be supreme bliss, [the coalescence of] transparency and emptiness,
free from subjective grasping.

27. The pristine cognition of the Path of Seeing
is considered to be the sign that there can be no falling back.

*The extent of the Path of Seeing:*

28. You should know that the Path of Seeing [extends]
from Ultimate Mundane Attainment to the second station.

## Niguma's Autocommentary on the Path of Seeing

1. Then, [following the Connecting Path] the Path of Seeing must be explained.

2. The essential quality of the Path of Seeing is the unqualified realization of the Four Noble Truths. It is defined as the Path of Seeing because one directly sees the Reality that one has not seen before. Its divisions are [the Four Noble Truths]:

a. suffering;
b. origination;
c. cessation; and
d. the path.

3. The ground for the assignment of its divisions [is described with reference to the following divisions]:

a. Seeing the Four Noble Truths, suffering and the rest, as emptiness is Receptivity to the Knowledge of the Real.
b. After that, the knowledge of the subsequent instant, [in which] one sees that emptiness in an extensive manner, is seeing the Reality of the Path of Seeing [i.e., the Knowledge of the Real].
c. The realization through which one thinks that both that Receptivity and Knowledge of the Real are the infallible causes for the attainment of enlightenment is Receptivity to Subsequent Knowledge with reference to the Four Noble Truths.
d. The arising of decisive certainty that that realization is without error is Receptivity to the Subsequent Knowledge of the Real with reference to the Four Noble Truths.
e. They are seen by the pristine cognition of the Path of Seeing. They are distinguished by the four degrees of lesser, greater, still greater, and very much greater [realization of] Reality.

4. The deliberate meditative discipline consists of the Seven Limbs of Enlightenment. It says in the *Byang-chub-sems-dpa' Blo-gros 'byung-gnas-kyis zhus-pa'i mdo* (Sūtra of the Dialogue with Bodhisattva Blo-gros 'byung-gnas):

a. Blo-gros 'byung-gnas inquired: "Victorious Lord! How should one regard the seven limbs of enlightenment?"
b. The Victorious Lord declared: "Blo-gros 'byung-gnas! These are the seven limbs of enlightenment: All elements of existence are

empty with regard to particular intrinsic characteristics. Thus, seeing that no element of existence attains to substantial reality is mindfulness as a limb of perfect enlightenment, because there is neither the act of remembering, nor is there deliberation.

c. "Blo-gros 'byung-gnas! Discrimination of the elements of existence as a limb of enlightenment [is the realization that] all so-called elements of existence are apparitional, not to be adhered to as objective points of reference at all, for they are not by any means established as substantially wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate.

d. "Blo-gros 'byung-gnas! Energetic application as a limb of perfect enlightenment is enthusiasm, nondiscursive devotion, and non-abandonment of striving with reference to the intuitive realizations of the path, which are free from subjective grasping, whereby one neither accepts nor rejects any of the elements of either the three mundane realms or nirvāṇa, for one has demolished the perceptions of the elements of existence.

e. "Blo-gros 'byung-gnas! Delight as a limb of perfect enlightenment is the removal of negative conditions, without the arising of delight about any conditioning elements, because all delight and unhappiness have been demolished.

f. "Blo-gros 'byung-gnas! Mental fitness as a limb of perfect enlightenment is the mind abiding in an unobscured and unqualified state of meditative concentration, [having achieved] physical fitness and mental fitness [with respect to] all elements of existence, for one does not adhere to even a particle of any element of existence that is present as an objective point of reference as an objective point of reference.

g. "Blo-gros 'byung-gnas! Concentration as a limb of perfect enlightenment is balanced absorption that is free from subjective grasping, the mind not adhering to any objective point of reference because the subjective grasping of the elements of existence has been demolished, or [the nature of those elements] realized. So it has been said that 'the mind being established in a balanced absorption in reference to a given thing, the elements of existence may be realized, but not by the mind not established in a balanced absorption; and with the mind established in a balanced absorption Buddhahood may be attained, but not without that balanced absorption.'

h. "Blo-gros 'byung-gnas! Equanimity as a limb of perfect enlightenment is that which causes no element of existence to abide anywhere, or to depend on, or to adhere to, or to become bound to anything, and by which mind does not grasp subjectively any element of existence, be it of pleasant, painful, or neutral mental

[sensation]. It is the delight that is obtained when [mind], not carried off by any element of worldly existence, becomes endowed with an equanimity that is not preoccupied with any element of existence.

i. "Blo-gros 'byung-gnas! One should regard the seven limbs of enlightenment in that way."

5. Thus, by the power of that mode of concentration:

One sees Reality directly,
and becoming endowed with higher perception,
knows delight to the point of tears.
Always continent,
one can transform one's body for the sake of living beings,
and renounce one's life for the sake of the Dharma.
This occurs to the intelligent on the Path of Seeing
and is explained as the sign of nonreturning.
There are one hundred and twelve qualities contrary to it.

6. It says in the *Avataṃsaka:*

As soon as one attains [the first] station,
one becomes free from five fears:
one is without [fear of] the lack of livelihood,
death, ill-repute, and the evil conditions,
and is free from fear of saṃsāra.
In those one finds nothing fearsome.
And why, one might ask, is that?
Because there ego has no abode.

Thus, it should be known that [the bodhisattva who attains the Path of Seeing] is free from five fears.

7. The 112 [negative qualities] to be abandoned in the attainment of the Path of Seeing, which is the first station, are particularities of the six projected negative affections. What are those six?

a. unawareness;
b. desire;
c. egotism;
d. anger;
e. doubt; and
f. opinion.

8. There are five [kinds of] opinion:

a. false notions of self;
b. extremist opinions;
c. perverse opinions;

d. conceit with regard to ethics and observances; and
e. conceit with regard to one's opinions.

9. Adding together the five opinions and the five that are not opinions, unawareness, etc., there are ten negative affections.

a. Because, in the Realm of Desire, those ten primary negative affections occur with reference to each of the Four Noble Truths, there are forty.
b. In the higher realms, the Realm of Pure Form and the Formless Realm, there are nine, anger being the exception, which, when applied to the Four Noble Truths, become thirty-six in the Realm of Pure Form and thirty-six in the Formless Realm, making seventy-two.
c. If the forty pertaining to the Realm of Desire are added to those, there are, [in all], 112 things to be abandoned by the Path of Seeing.

10. As for the manner in which they are abandoned: The very great negative affections that are to be abandoned by the Path of Seeing are like a great darkness, which is abandoned by the small lamp of pristine cognition. Furthermore, they may be abandoned either by [the realization of] the Four Noble Truths, as explained above, or all at once, by the realization of the absence of self.

11. Moreover, there is the manner in which the truth is seen according to the Tantras.

a. It says in the *Ye-shes mngon-'byung* (The Disclosure of Pristine Cognition):

   By the *karmamudrā,* who is supreme bliss,
   the internal knot, grasping things as existing in truth, is undone by day;
   the internal knot of bewilderment is undone by night.
   Thus is the way of enlightenment taught.

b. And in the same work:

   The bliss of the *mudrā,* bliss supreme,
   comes from the grace of the guru.
   It is seeing Reality directly,
   and is renowned as the primary truth.

c. It says in the *Dam-tshig bkod-pa'i rgyud* (Tantra of the Array of Commitments):

   By day apparition, [the coalescence of] appearance and emptiness,
   and by night, in dream, the embodiment of the deity naturally arise.
   When one does not wander from that [vision]

the Sambhogakāya of the Jina [is attained].
[Realizing this] for a moment,
one [will attain] nirvāṇa in the Intermediate State.
What, then, need be said of continually abiding in it?
The same may be said of Apparition and Luminosity.
One must not speak of this to others.

d. It says in the *Ye-shes gsal-ba'i rgyud phyi-ma* (Subsequent Tantra which Clarifies Pristine Cognition):

If the impure tendencies of bewilderment,
those of the day and of dream,
do not remain on the eighth station
what then need be said of the Lotus-endowed?

e. It says in the *Tshangs-pa kun-dga'i mdo* (Sūtra of Brahma Ānanda):

The qualities of the paths and stations
should be realized during occasions of dream.

12. The boundaries [of the Path of Seeing extend] from the end of the Ultimate Mundane Attainment to the arising of the second station.

## Notes

1. I was first encouraged in my study of the Shangs-pa tradition by its leading contemporary representative, the late Venerable Kalu Rinpoche Rang-byung Kun-khyab (1905–1989), to whose inspiration I remain profoundly indebted. For a summary of my initial research on the Shangs-pa, see Matthew Kapstein, "The Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud: An Unknown Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism," in Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi, eds., *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1980), 138–144. I am grateful to the Institute for the Advanced Study of World Religions, and above all to its founder and first president, Dr. C. T. Shen, for their generous sponsorship of my work on the Shangs-pa tradition in 1978–1979.

2. The traditional account of Khyung-po Rnal-'byor's life, as given in George Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), 728–733, is surveyed in David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors,* vol. 2 (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), 499–504, although Snellgrove's attempt (p. 501, n. 194) to resolve simply the difficulties that (as I have suggested in "The Shangs-pa bKa'-brgyud") surround the dating of Khyung-po's activities cannot be accepted. This complicated matter requires careful analysis of the original text of Khyung-po's complete *rnam-thar,* not just of the synopsis of that text given in later, derivative documents such as *The Blue Annals.* Such analysis cannot be carried out here, but will be treated in the introduction to my forthcoming edition and translation of Niguma's **Māyādhvakrama.* The primary sources for the study of early Shangs-pa biography are found in *Shangs-pa gser-'phreng: A Golden Rosary of the Lives of Masters of the Shangs-pa dKar-brgyud-pa* (sic) *Schools,* Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod, vol. 15 (Leh: T. W. Tashigangpa, 1970), and *Śaṅs-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa Texts: A collection of rare manuscripts of doctrinal, ritual, and biographical works of scholars of the Śaṅs-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa tradition from the monastery of Gsaṅ-sṅags-chos-gliṅ in Kinnaur* (Sumra, H.P.: Urgyan Dorje, 1977), 2 vols.

3. The relationship between Niguma's **Māyādhvakramavṛtti* and Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa's *Sgyu-ma ngal-gso'i 'grel-pa shing-rta bzang-po* is established beyond doubt by a thorough comparative analysis of the two texts, which will appear in my forthcoming study of Niguma's work. Klong-chen-pa probably became familiar with the Shangs-pa teaching through his master Kumarādza (1266–1343), who was active at Tsā-ri, a hallowed Central Tibetan site for meditational retreat much favored by the early Shangs-pa masters. Biographical accounts of Kumarādza and Klong-chen-pa are found in Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History,* trans. Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein (London: Wisdom Publications, 1990), vol. 1, bk. 2, pt. 4.

4. The history of this protector within the Dge-lugs-pa tradition is given by the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma, Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho, *Record of Teachings Received* [*Gsan-yig gang-gā'i chu-rgyun*] (New Delhi: Nechung and Lhakar, 1970), vol. 1, plates 401–424. An account of the same deity from the perspective of the rival Jo-nang-pa tradition, authored by Jo-nang Rje-btsun Tāranātha, is found in *Shangs-pa gser-'phreng.*

5. Janet Gyatso, "The Teachings of Thang-stong rgyal-po," in Michael Aris and Aung San Sun Kyi, eds., *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson,* pp. 111–119.

6. The teachings of the Shangs-pa tradition as transmitted through the lineage of Mkhyen-brtse and Kong-sprul are collected in 'Jam-mgon Koṅ-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas, *Gdams ṅag mdzod* (Delhi: Gelek and Lungtok, 1971), vol. 8, plates 237–332 representing the tradition of Thang-stong rgyal-po, and plates 333–543, the foremost texts of the Jo-nang-pa transmission of Shangs-pa meditational and yogic instruction.

7. These are the *Sgyu-ma lam-gyi rim-pa (*Māyādhvakrama)* and the *Sgyu-ma lam-gyi rim-pa'i 'grel-pa (*Māyādhvakramavṛtti).* Four editions of these texts have come to light so far: nos. 4643–4644 in the Peking edition of the Tibetan Bstan-'gyur; the similar redaction found in the Snar-thang edition of the Tibetan canon; and two manuscript versions published in facsimile in *Śaṅs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa Texts* and in *Encyclopedia Tibetica: The Collected Works of Bo-doṅ Paṇ-chen Phyogs-las-rnam-rgyal* (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1969–1972). These two works are not found in the Sde-dge or Co-ne canons. My edition-cum-translation of them is based on all four available versions, referring also to the citations given by Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa.

8. My investigations have led me to question whether the historical reality of Niguma is to be understood literally, and hence I am perplexed about the exact origins of the texts attributed to her, though the case is by no means decided. The arguments on both sides will be summarized in the introduction to my forthcoming study of Niguma's works. Whatever the solution (if, indeed, the problem is ever solved), it remains certain that the texts in question well represent the milieu of eleventh- and twelfth-century Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, and that they were, in their early history, exclusively associated with the Shangs-pa school.

9. I would be very interested to learn of any other scholastic writings attributed to Indian Buddhist women, should readers of this chapter be aware of such materials. It is, of course, true that learned women are depicted in some Indian Buddhist scriptures, and in the Tamil romance *Manimekhalaī* the heroine is even made to study the logic of Dignāga. This intriguing product of Tamil Buddhism has recently been translated into English by Alain Daniélou in *Manimekhalaī (The Dancer with the Magic Bowl)* by Merchant-Prince Shattan (New York: New

Directions, 1989), but exactly how its evidence is to be interpreted historically remains problematic in the extreme. I have not yet had the opportunity to read Paula Richman's *Women, Branch Stories, and Religious Rhetoric in a Tamil Buddhist Text* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1988).

10. In *The Autobiography of 'Jam-mgon Koṅ-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas* (Bir, H. P.: Kandro, 1973), plate 89, we find the term explained as follows: "In general, *rnam-thar* is from the [Sanskrit] term *vimokṣa,* [which signifies] release or liberation. It is thus a historical account, concerning release from the evil destinies owing to the possession of pure faith in the case of the least among aspirants, concerning release from the ocean of saṃsāra owing to the possession of pure renunciation in the case of the middling aspirant, and concerning liberation from the two extremes of mundane being and peace owing to the possession of purity of higher meditation in the case of the best aspirant. In brief, it refers to a remarkable history of one's own release from suffering and its cause, while bringing about the liberation of other minds from bondage" *(de la spyir rnam thar ces pa ni bi mokṣa'i sgra las rnam par thar pa'am rnam par grol ba ste gang zag tha ma dad pa rnam par dag pa dang ldan pas ngan 'gro'i srid pa las rnam par thar pa dang/ 'bring nges 'byung rnam par dag pa dang ldan pas 'khor ba'i rgya mtsho las rnam par thar pa dang/ rab lhag bsam rnam par dag pa dang ldan pas srid zhi'i mtha' gnyis las rnam par grol pa'i lo rgyus bshad pa ste/ mdor na rang nyid sdug bsngal dang de'i rgyu las rnam par thar zhing gzhan rgyud 'ching ba las grol par byed pa'i lo rgyus rmad du byung ba zhig la brjod pa yin).*

11. The term *"lcam-mo,"* which originally means "elder sister," is ambiguous in this context: it may retain its literal significance or be a polite term for "wife." The Shangs-pa tradition adheres to the former interpretation, whereas historians of other Bka'-brgyud traditions tend to adopt the latter. It is also possible for the term to be used in a purely metaphorical sense, to mean something like "spiritual sister."

12. The description of Niguma is, of course, a sort of trope, portraying a yoginī of the Śaivite Kāpālika sect. Compare the yoginī Kapālakuṇḍalā, a minor character in the drama *Mālatīmādhava* by Bhavabhūti (early eighth century):

> The speed of my flight through the sky endows me with a great and charming tumultuousness. Shrill small bells jangle as they strike against the garland of skulls swinging to and fro about my neck. My pile of matted locks, though fastened by firm knots, streams out in every direction. The bell on my *khaṭvāṅga* staff seems to ring out with a continuous piercing scream as it whirls round and round. The wind whistling through the hollows of the row of bare skulls constantly jingles the small bells and causes my banners to flap about. . . . I can tell that the nearby enclosure of the great cremation area is in front of me by the smoke from the funeral pyres.

Quoted in David N. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), 56. The Buddhist tantric appropriation of Kāpālika imagery was very extensive, and appears to have been deliberate and systematic rather than a product of the "corruption" of later Indian Buddhism. The motivations underlying this appropriation have yet to be adequately explained.

13. The "scattering of the gold" is a not uncommon motif: for example, in Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School* we find Padmasambhava scattering the gold-dust he has been offered to encourage him to visit Tibet (vol. 1, bk. 2, pt.

3) and Guru Chos-kyi dbang-phyug scattering the gold he is given as a parting gift by his Newari disciple Bharo Gtsug-'dzin (ibid., pt. 6). Besides being indicative of the master's detachment, this motif can usually be related to the purified transformation of the mundane, as it is in the present account.

14. *Shangs-pa gser-'phreng, Khyung-po rnal-'byor-pa'i rnam-thar,* folios 15b–17a.

15. It is the Peking edition of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka that actually preserves the bulk of the works attributed to Niguma: nos. 4633–4634, 4637–4650, 4657.

16. It is important to note that after his encounter with Niguma Khyung-po meets another yoginī who also becomes his teacher—namely, Sukhasiddhi, whose yogas form a special collection within the Shangs-pa corpus, although a much less extensive one than those of Niguma. An attempt to interpret this peculiar recapitulation is found in Judith Hanson and Mervin V. Hanson, "The Mediating Buddha," in Barbara N. Aziz and Matthew Kapstein, eds., *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization* (Delhi: Manohar, 1985), 296–303.

17. There is, of course, much controversy surrounding the proper definition and application of the term "shamanism." As a tentative point of departure, at least, one must refer to the authority of the single most influential work on the topic: Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972). In chapters 11 and 12 we find Eliade's approach to the question of shamanic dimensions of Indian and Tibetan (among other Indo-European and East Asian) religious phenomena. Although some particular difficulties encountered in applying Eliade's conceptions to the study of Tibetan Buddhism will emerge below, let us first note the general criticism of Eliade found in Amanda Porterfield, "Shamanism: A Psychosocial Definition," in *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LV/4 (1987): 721–739, namely, that his "transcendental conception of spirits as manifestations of the sacred order behind ordinary reality also prevents analysis of their psychosocial referents and functions" (p. 735). In elaborating a psychosocial definition, Porterfield argues that

> The emotionally compelling aspect of shamanism is its dramatization of the distress experienced by the shaman's patrons. . . . The shaman helps his patrons appreciate symbols that address, interpret, and contribute to the resolution of their most pressing problems and conflicts . . . [B]y manifesting in his own body symbols that represent the resolution of problems besetting his patrons, *the shaman's own body is the locus of symbol production and this aspect of shamanism distinguishes it from other types of religious activity that symbolically address psychological and social problems, such as prophecy and priestly activity* (pp. 725–726, italics added).

It appears to me to be just this distinctive somatic localization of symbol production that forges an immediate link between shamanism and tantric practice, permitting the latter to harmonize to some extent the interests of shamanic and priestly religion. That some such harmonization or mediation does characterize important aspects of Tibetan Buddhism has been maintained primarily among anthropologists; examples are Robert Paul, *The Tibetan Symbolic World: Psychoanalytic Explorations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 82–89, and Geoffrey Samuel, "Early Buddhism in Tibet: Some Anthropological Perspectives," in Aziz and Kapstein, eds., *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization,* pp. 383–397.

18. Cf. Janet Gyatso, "The Development of the *Gcod* Tradition," in Aziz and Kapstein, eds., *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization,* esp. pp. 322–323. Such considerations have encouraged a general restraint among textually oriented Tibetologists about accepting "shamanism" as a useful category in the description of

Tibetan Buddhism, or even of non-Buddhist Tibetan religious phenomena. Thus Giuseppe Tucci, in *The Religions of Tibet* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), passim, makes free use of the term but qualifies this convention by noting, in the course of his discussion of the Bon religion: "In our description the word shaman has occasionally been used. There can surely be no doubt of the existence of certain similarities between the old Tibetan religion and shamanism; the ride through the air, the magical use of the drum, the calling back of the souls of the dead or dying—all these were duties of particular classes of *gshen*. . . . All the same one can scarcely find here definite traces of those ecstatic aspects of shamanism so well portrayed by Mircea Eliade" (pp. 241–242). Anthropologists working among Tibetan and neighboring Himalayan peoples have exhibited rather less reticence here: see, for instance, in addition to the works cited in note 17 above, J. Hitchcock and R. Jones, eds., *Spirit Possession in the Nepal Himalayas* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1976). Of interest, too, is Reneé de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), chap. 27, "Some Notes on Tibetan Shamanism."

19. See Eliade, *Shamanism,* pp. 99–109, on the quest in native North American shamanic initiation and its contrast with Asiatic shamanism. Alan Sponberg has rightly reminded me that the accounts of Chinese pilgrims in India do report questlike phenomena, so that it is plausible that we are being somewhat misled by the Indian textual record. See, for example, Samuel Beal, *Si-yu Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), pt. 2, pp. 221–227, on the tale of Bhāvaviveka and the palace of asuras. But we may also wonder whether the emphasis on such phenomena found in the writings of Chinese pilgrims does not reflect somewhat their own peculiar cultural and religious milieu.

20. Note, in particular, the hagiography of Nāgārjuna, as given in James B. Robinson, trans., *Buddha's Lions: The Lives of the Eighty-Four Siddhas* (Berkeley, Calif.: Dharma Publishing, 1979), 74–80. The *Maṇicūḍāvadāna,* as told by Kṣemendra (*Avadānakalpalatā,* P. L. Vaidya, ed., Buddhist Sanskrit Texts No. 22 [Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1959], 1:22–37), with its powerful imagery of a journey culminating in grotesque bodily self-sacrifice, also merits consideration in this context. The perception, however, that vision-quest motifs have been regularly accentuated by the Tibetans is much strengthened when we contrast the Indian version of Nāropā's hagiography, found in Robinson (*Buddha's Lions,* pp. 93–95) with the much elaborated Tibetan version translated in Herbert V. Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

21. Eliade, who does not fail to remark on apparently shamanic aspects of the Buddha-legend (*Shamanism,* pp. 403–412), seems to concur with this assessment. In ibid., p. 407, he states that "in Buddhism it is no longer a question of a symbolic ascent to the heavens, but of degrees of meditation and, at the same time, of 'strides' toward final liberation."

22. I am indebted here to the remarks of Raoul Birnbaum concerning pilgrimage at Wutaishan, delivered at the 1988 national meeting of the Association for Asian Studies held in San Francisco. The great Chinese novel of visionary pilgrimage, *The Journey to the West,* provides perhaps the most graphic literary example.

23. This becomes quite clear in the tales of Padmasambhava's subjugation of the hostile gods and demons of Tibet, reenacted in annual dance-dramas (*'cham*) throughout the Tibetan Buddhist domain.

24. Cf. Turrell V. Wylie, "Etymology of Tibetan: *Bla-ma,*" *Central Asiatic*

*Journal,* vol. 21/2 (1977): 145–148. On *bla* generally, see R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1972), 226–229.

25. These actions are often explicitly interrelated. Thus, for instance, Khyung-po declares, "I impelled all those demons that bring injury to men not to bring injury to men" (*Śaṅs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa Texts,* vol. 1, plate 459).

26. Some examples: "[E]very Teleut shaman has a celestial wife who lives in the seventh heaven. During his ecstatic journey to Bai Ülgän, the shaman meets his wife, and she asks him to remain with her; she has prepared an exquisite banquet for them" (Eliade, *Shamanism,* p. 76). "[D]uring the initiation people dance, drink, and sing, exactly as they do at weddings" (ibid., p. 76). "[T]he ribbons employed in Buryat initiations are called 'rainbows'; in general, they symbolize the shaman's journey to the sky" (ibid., p. 135). "The Tatars of the Altai imagine Bai Ülgän in the middle of the sky, seated on a golden mountain" (ibid., p. 266). "Transmission takes place in dreams and includes an initiatory scenario. . . . Among the Maricopa initiatory dreams follow a traditional schema: a spirit takes the future shaman's soul and leads him from mountain to mountain" (ibid., p. 103). An Eskimo shaman tells the candidate, "Then the bear of the lake or the inland glacier will come out, he will devour all your flesh and make you a skeleton, and you will die. But you will recover your flesh, you will awaken" (ibid., p. 59). It may be objected that the relationship between the Siberian shaman and his celestial wife always has an erotic component, but this, too, is represented in the *rnam-thar* of Khyung-po Rnal-'byor, in his encounter with the *ḍākinī* Sukhasiddhi: "At first she was most gracious, fully conferring on me the four empowerments in an emanational maṇḍala. Intermediately she was most gracious, acting as my secret consort who was none other than a goddess. In the end she was most gracious, fully bestowing all the esoteric instructions upon me" (*Śaṅs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa Texts,* vol. 1, plate 440).

27. Cf. Takasaki Jikido, *An Introduction to Buddhism,* trans. Rolf W. Giebel (Tokyo: Tōhō Gakkai, 1987), 191: "[F]aith in the Buddha was expounded in all the early Mahāyāna sūtras to a greater or lesser degree. Yet although the Buddha is thus elevated to absolute heights, at the same time Mahāyāna Buddhism is also characterized by a wish to emulate the Buddha, to tread the same path, and to attain the same spiritual heights, even if it means calling on his assistance." The perspective of Vajrayāna is well represented in an oft-quoted verse found in D. L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), I. viii. 35–36: "In that realization of the perfect truth there is neither Wisdom nor Means. (36) By no other way may it be told, and from no one may it be received. It is known intuitively as a result of merit and of honouring one's *guru* and the set observances."

28. I am thus taking exception to the manner in which the term "Lamaism" is used, for example by Stein (*Tibetan Civilization,* pp. 164–191) or Tucci (*The Religions of Tibet,* chap. 3), where doctrine is emphasized above the peculiar institutional features of Tibetan Buddhism. That doctrine is employed in the service of institutions is not to be questioned. But if we wish to mark Lamaism off from the later Indian Buddhism of, for instance, Nālandā and Vikramaśīla, doctrine does not serve as an adequate differentiating characteristic. To see what does distinguish it, we must attend closely to the conjunction of the propositions that "the entire political and cultural history of Tibet was dominated by the monasteries" (Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet,* p. 110) and that "in Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism the *guru* . . . is enabled, through living, direct contact, to transmit the letter and the spirit of the teaching, and to awaken the

sparks out of which blaze forth the fire of mystical experience" (ibid., p. 44). It is in the mutual reinforcement of these two propositions within the Tibetan world that the essential character of Lamaism is determined.

29. Indeed, the strict relationship between devotion to one's guru and the practice of yoga within the Indo-Tibetan Vajrayāna tradition is given formal expression in the terms of the tradition itself through the ubiquitous practice of *guruyoga,* for a typical Bka'-brgyud-pa formulation of which, see Jamgön Kongtrül, *The Torch of Certainty,* trans. Judith Hanson (Boulder, Colo.: Shambhala, 1976).

30. That the *rnam-thars* of tantric adepts may often be read as allegorical accounts of specific paths of yogic practice is well known: see, for instance, Janice D. Willis, "On the Nature of *Rnam-thar:* Early Dge-lugs-pa *Siddha* Biographies," in Aziz and Kapstein, eds., *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization,* pp. 304–319; and Dorje and Kapstein, "Translators' Introduction," in Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School,* vol. 1, bk. 2.

31. Works supplying useful background on the categories of Buddhist tantras include: Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School,* vol. 1, bk. 1, pt. 4; Ferdinand D. Lessing and Alex Wayman, *Mkhas grub rje's Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras* (The Hague/Paris: Mouton, 1968); Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism,* vol. 1, pt. III; and Tsong-kha-pa, *Tantra in Tibet: The Great Exposition of Secret Mantra,* trans. Jeffrey Hopkins (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977), esp. pp. 151–164.

32. Detailed accounts of the six yogas are found in Chang Chen Chi, trans., *Esoteric Teachings of the Tibetan Tantra* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1981), pt. 2, and Herbert V. Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa,* esp. pp. 43–86, where the six are included among the teachings transmitted in connection with Nāropā's "twelve great acts of self-denial."

33. For a convenient survey of the yogas of Niguma, see Glenn Mullin, trans., *Selected Works of Dalai Lama II: The Tantric Yogas of Sister Niguma* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1985). Tāla'i Bla-ma II Dge-'dun rgya-mtsho (1476–1542) himself hailed from a family with strong ancestral connections to the Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud tradition.

34. 'Jam-mgon Koṅ-sprul, *Gdams-ṅag mdzod,* vol. 12, plate 674.

35. *Bodhicaryāvatāra,* 9.1ab.

36. David L. Snellgrove, "Saraha's Treasury of Songs," in Edward Conze, ed., *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 224–239; Herbert V. Guenther, *The Royal Song of Saraha: A Study in the History of Buddhist Thought* (Berkeley/London: Shambhala, 1973).

37. Cf. the hagiographies given in Robinson, trans., *Buddha's Lions.*

38. One of the peculiar difficulties with which Niguma's autocommentary confronts us is its abundant citations from works not otherwise known to us.

39. Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads,* trans. A. S. Geden (New York: Dover, 1965), 50.

40. In these remarks, and those immediately following, a great body of very complicated material, some of which is considered in proper depth in other contributions to the present volume, is summarized in few words. For present purposes, the abhidharmic doctrines of the path as interpreted in the early Yogācāra school are best represented in the *mārgasatya* section of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* of Asaṅga: see Walpola Rahula, *Le Compendium de la Super-Doctrine (Philosophie) (Abhidharmasamuccaya) d'Asaṅga* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1971), 104–130. Rahula's note 9 (p. 117) provides useful observations on the relationship between the postcanonical lists of the *bodhipakṣadharmas* and

the enumerations found in the Pali *Nikāyas.* Note, too, that popular literature on Buddhism in the West has almost universally failed to observe that, from the standpoint of the Abhidharma traditions, the eightfold path represents not an elementary guide to the Buddhist life but the practice of only the most advanced disciples. The characteristically Mahāyāna exposition of the relationship between the five paths and thirty-seven *bodhipakṣadharmas* emerges, for instance, in the *Bodhipakṣādhikāra* of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra,* S. Bagchi, ed., Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 13 (Darbhanga, Bihar: Mithila Institute, 1970), 128–153.

41. In this outline the roman numerals I to VIII represent the eight "chapters" into which I have divided Niguma's work in my forthcoming edition and translation.

42. Here we encounter another of the peculiar difficulties raised by the extant Tibetan version of Niguma's work: *mīmāṃsā* is normally rendered in Tibetan as *dpyod-pa,* though this is often misspelled as *spyod-pa,* a homonym meaning "conduct, activity," and used in translation for the Sanskrit *caryā.* In Niguma's *Path* and its autocommentary, we indeed find the common orthographical variant *spyod-pa,* but with an additional twist—the text supports our understanding of the term as "conduct" *(caryā)* and *not* as "investigation" *(mīmāṃsā).* Further discussion of this and other, similar problems will appear in my forthcoming study of Niguma's work.

43. Compare, for instance, Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 47: "In all religions some assumptions are taken on trust and accepted on the authority of the Scriptures or Teachers. Buddhism, however, regards faith as only a preliminary step, a merely provisional state."

44. I wish to thank professors Carl Bielefeldt and Bernard Faure of the Department of Religion, Stanford University, for arranging the presentation of this paper to Stanford's Buddhist Studies Seminar in February 1989. The pleasant discussion on that occasion did much to guide my revision for the present publication.

45. Probably the "three wheels" of religious works *(las),* teaching and study *('chad-pa),* and meditative attainment *(sgrub-pa),* which become manifest in all aspects of the advanced practitioner's routine, and which correspond to the "three gates" of body, speech, and mind that are transformed through the practice of the Tantras.

# A Tibetan Perspective on the Nature of Spiritual Experience

JEFFREY HOPKINS

## Background

Buddhism began gradually to be introduced to Tibet in the seventh century C.E., more than a thousand years after Śākyamuni Buddha's passing away. The form it took in Tibet was greatly influenced by the highly developed form of the religion that was present in India through the twelfth century (and even later); the geographic proximity and relatively undeveloped culture of the region provided conditions for an extensive, systematic transfer of highly developed scholastic commentaries and systems of practice. Unlike its East Asian counterparts, Tibetan Buddhism is centered not on Buddha's word as found in sūtras and tantras, but on Indian commentaries, many of which never made their way to East Asia. Scholasticism, therefore, often occupies a more central place in Tibetan culture than it does farther east; however, Tibetan culture is by no means characterized solely by devotion to scholastic inquiry. Rather, one of the keys to approaching Tibetan culture is its fascination with extreme forms of religious expression, whether in devotion, solitary yoga, philosophical debate, art, social organization around exalted figures, or the like. Moderation, though seemingly central to Buddhist dictums, is not the dominant theme. A visit to a Tibetan temple with its hundreds of images or to a reliquary adorned with literally tons of gold speaks to the unmoderated vibrancy of the culture.

## Soteriology

The term "soteriology" at first seems out of place when considering the "self-help" presentations of Buddhism that predominate in the Tibetan cultural region. "Soteriology," which is built from the Greek *sōter* (savior) and means a "doctrine of salvation" or "way of salvation,"[1] seems

to require an external agency that saves and rescues beings, whereas the Buddhism of this area for the most part (exceptions to be discussed) emphasizes that the preconditions necessary for liberation from suffering are within each person, and also that the techniques of rescue are to be enacted by practitioners themselves, not by an external savior. Exalted beings may help by teaching the path and by providing booster-blessings, but the path can be put into practice only by individual people. Thus, in translating these systems' terminology for release from undesirable states, I prefer such terms as "liberation" over "salvation" and "liberative" over "soteriological."

There are indeed external rescuers who assume considerable importance in Tibet, such as the female deity Tārā, whose very name means "rescuer" or "savioress"; also, the purpose of a majority of mantras is to call on deities such as Mañjuśrī for help. However, the main brunt of the normative tradition, as it is explained in the lectures halls and debating courtyards of Tibetan religious orders, does not view the process of gaining freedom as coming from an external agency. Even though many cultural practices in the Tibetan-Mongolian cultural region turn this orientation on its head through almost countless forms of "other-help" remedies, ranging from attendance at cleansing rituals to purchasing charms, drinking holy water, merely seeing people purported to be holy, and propitiating mundane deities—the extreme extent of which flies in the face of the basic call to make effort at internal practice—the normative tradition as well as much informed practice of the path is founded on self-help, albeit with boosts from the outside. Thus "soteriology" seems, from many but not all viewpoints, to be out of place in discussing the Buddhism of this region.

Still, I shrink from using neologisms such as "lysiology," or even the simpler but awkward "liberatology." There are a number of uses of "saving" in English in a reflexive context (saving oneself from trouble, etc.). Also, *dharma*—the basic Sanskrit word that can be taken as meaning "religion," and that is built from the verbal root *dhṛ* (to hold)—is etymologized as referring to doctrines (or practices) that hold a practitioner back from fright, specifically from the frights (1) of being reborn in a bad transmigration; (2) of being trapped in the round of suffering, whether in a good or bad transmigration; (3) of all sentient beings' being limited by obstructions preventing full development; and (4) of ordinary appearances and the conception of ordinariness.[2] The practices of self-help hold practitioners back, rescue, and save them from unwanted states. Hence, with the proviso that "self-help" is accepted as an integral part of "soteriology" and that an external savior is not the primary concern, I will use the term here.

Ninian Smart makes just such an allowance for self-help when he says about soteriology:

> The implication of the idea is that human beings are in some kind of unfortunate condition and may achieve an ultimately good state either by their own efforts or through the intervention of some divine power.[3]

Despite its etymology, he does not limit the scope of soteriology to other-help but includes self-help as well.

However, I take issue with Smart's limiting the scope of soteriology to the achievement of "an ultimately good state," for an important distinction needs to made with respect to Buddhist traditions: The "good states" that are being sought are not necessarily ultimate because they are of two types, one provisional and the other ultimate—namely, (1) release from low levels of transmigration into higher levels as humans, demigods, or gods, and (2) release from the entire round of suffering.[4] The latter is also envisioned as having two levels—(a) attainment of a lower enlightenment that is mere liberation from the round of suffering, and (b) attainment of the supreme enlightenment of altruistically effective buddhahood. Because the levels of concern, or "unfortunate conditions" from which Buddhists are trying to free themselves, are both provisional and ultimate, soteriology in this context cannot be limited to the notion of leading practitioners to ultimate states. The lower limit of soteriology in many Buddhist traditions is rescue from certain unfavorable conditions in a future lifetime—the goal being a more favorable state but one that is still trapped within the round of suffering. Such saving is an important part of this tradition (as is discussed below), and thus it would be an unwarranted superimposition to limit its soteriology, its doctrine of salvation, to more profound levels.

## Sources

To give a picture of the states and means of rescue that are described in Tibetan Buddhism, I will use both written and oral sources. The written material is from genres of literature called "stages of the path" *(lam rim),* "decisive analyses" *(mtha' dpyod),* and "grounds and paths" *(sa lam);*[5] the oral sources are commentaries by contemporary lama-scholars that bring the language of the texts—often stilted by strict rules of redundancy—to life. Both types of sources are drawn primarily but not exclusively from one of the most scholastic orders of Tibetan Buddhism, the dGe-lugs-pa (Dge-lugs-pa) sect, founded by the polymath and yogi Tsong-kha-pa (1357–1419), who was born in the northeastern province of Tibet called A-mdo. As I have explained elsewhere, his followers came to have great influence throughout a vast region stretching from Kalmuck Mongolian areas near the Volga River (in Europe), where the Volga empties into the Caspian Sea, to Outer and Inner Mongolia, the Buriat Republic of Siberia, and most parts of Tibet and Ladakh.

Tsong-kha-pa established a system of education centered in large universities, eventually in three areas of Tibet, but primarily in Lhasa, the capital, which was as Rome is for the Catholic Church. For five centuries, young men came from all the abovementioned regions to these large Tibetan universities to study, usually (until the Communist takeovers) returning to their native lands after completing their degrees. My presentation is largely from standard dGe-lugs-pa perspectives[6] on the sūtra vehicle and the tantra vehicle (also called the vajra vehicle; Tib. *rdo rje theg pa,* Skt. Vajrayāna), the two basic forms of what is traditionally accepted as Śākyamuni Buddha's teaching.

The first genre of written material, "stages of the path," belongs to a wider class of texts that have a practical rather than theoretical orientation. These texts are aimed at making more coherent and accessible the plethora of practices that were inherited from India and that are the topics of critical study in more theoretical texts. In the standard dGe-lugs-pa educational curriculum,[7] six years are spent studying Maitreya's *Ornament for Clear Realization (mngon rtogs rgyan, Abhisamayālaṃkāra),*[8] a highly elaborate compendium on the paths that is not practiced in its own form. Rather, the long period of study is used to enrich understanding of a complex structure of spiritual development that provides an all-encompassing worldview daunting in its intricacy. Though the structure of the path, as it is presented in this text, does not provide the rubric of actual practice, much of its import is brought over to "stages of the path" literature, the practical use of which is certified by the great number of short texts in this genre aimed at daily meditation. The more complex system, having 173 aspects, provides a perimeter within which the more practical teachings can be enacted.

The second genre that I shall cite, "decisive analyses," are monastic textbooks on seminal Indian texts, in this case Maitreya's *Ornament for Clear Realization.* In its more advanced forms, this genre provides active stimulation of the intellect through juxtaposing assertions that are or appear to be contradictory, and through making what are often highly elaborate and aesthetically attractive reformulations of assertions in order to create coherence. In this genre, the intellectual fervor behind these topics and the format of philosophical confrontation (which is not accompanied by concluding practical summations) suggests that the aim is not what would usually be considered practice (i.e., meditation cultivating what has been studied); rather, the goal is endless intellectual reflection. This perspective has resulted in the flowering of intellectual pursuits in Tibet, but calls into question the injunctions to practical implementation. It appears that internal practice has given way to external debate on major and minor issues, but the emphasis on intellectual development also stems from stark recognition that these matters are not easily penetrated, requiring much intellectual exploration, and

that immersion in topics—even to the point of entering a maze of conceptuality—can bear fruit over lifetimes. This is, at least, the system's self-justification for pursuing ever more refined conceptualization.

The third genre, "grounds and paths," is generally comprised of fairly brief texts used to structure—in a technical but more accessible format—complex Indian texts, again in this case Maitreya's *Ornament for Clear Realization.* A straight reading of such a text can be an exercise in boredom, but with the oral commentary of a teacher who is versed in a lineage of exegesis, the technical vocabulary can come to life in a vivid realm of imagination, much like a novel about a mythic land. Such stimulation of the metaphysical imagination is at the heart of the process of study in this tradition; whereas it may seem dry and sterile to those for whom the terminology has not been enlivened through evocative commentary, for those who have undergone this process the same technical vocabulary reverberates with meaning and epiphanies of new connections. Exploration of the elaborate architecture of the path itself becomes an important phase of the path, not to the exclusion of actually generating these path-states in meditation, but as an important part of creating a worldview that itself exerts a transformative force on the mind. It also often serves as a substitute for meditative practice, but even in such a context, its power is not to be belittled just because it contradicts the system's own dictum that meditation is the goal.

## The Topics

Making use of these three genres of literature as well as oral commentary, I will consider first a threefold typology of practitioners and paths; then the profound experience of the mind of clear light in Highest Yoga Tantra; and finally the meaning of "path," or spiritual experience, in a more general sense. These topics provide a structure for considering—in an ancillary way—doctrinal, ethical, and social dimensions of Buddhist soteriology in the Tibetan cultural region. Much of the impetus of the inquiry is derived from my fascination, for more than two decades, with four issues:

1. In dGe-lugs-pa literature on the path of the sūtra systems, which are considered foundational and preparatory to the tantra systems, great stress is put on generating a plethora of attitudes and relationships, whereas in the form of tantra that is mainly practiced the practitioner seeks explicitly to withdraw all levels of coarser consciousness so that the most subtle level of mind can manifest. On the surface, the two styles of practice seem to be at odds, on the one hand extending and developing more and more beneficial attitudes, and on the other hand purposely seeking to cease all usual

mental activity. I will contend that a basic harmony—between the earlier elaborative practices and the later practices that are aimed directly at manifestation of the fundamental innate mind of clear light—is that they both involve withdrawal of bifurcating attitudes and extension of homogeneous ones.

2. This highly developed Tibetan tradition presents an intricately formulated series of paths, the very orderliness of which gives an impression of smooth, methodical progress. The elegance of the architecture of the system suggests that with the will to perform a graded series of practices, like following a map to a city, enlightenment is sure to be found. The neatly ordered path-structure communicates few of the dangers with which mental transformation is fraught—the harrowing readjustments of perceptions and priorities, the stagnation brought on by psychological blockages, and the counterproductive illusions generated by misunderstandings and preliminary experiences. To bring to the fore these aspects of practice of the path, I will briefly examine Rudolph Otto's description of the *mysterium tremendum* in order to provide a mirror in which similar presentations within the tradition can be seen.[9] I will attempt to put the compellingly beautiful, symmetrical structure of the path in the asymmetrical perspective of actual experience.
3. The systemization of the Buddhist path that this school presents performs many functions: it provides a basic handbook for practitioners; it explicates spiritual experience by providing a map of its levels; it provides a structure for theoretic discourse the impetus for which comes from actual experience but also from demands of coherence, elegance of system, and an overriding agenda of providing a comprehensive worldview; and it also serves socioeconomic purposes of providing favored group identification, isolating the "ins" from the "outs." I will touch on these interpenetrating layers, which are often at such cross-purposes that a message of universal compassion, for instance, becomes wrapped in a package of prejudiced parochialism.
4. Finally, I will suggest that, through studying this Buddhist system, we can find hints that soteriological experience in general may be a matter of acquiring (or uncovering) perspectives that are at first dramatically "other" but that, with acculturation, are felt to be one's own basic nature.

To explore these topics, it is necessary to set the scene by "letting the tradition speak for itself" in its own style and vocabulary. I will do this by utilizing the oral and written sources mentioned above to pursue detail that will ground the ensuing discussion in the culture's own postures.

## A Typology of Religious Experience

What do Tibetan systems see as constituting religious experience? An avenue of approach to this difficult topic that provides a wide perspective is to consider a basic typology of religious persons offered by the Bengali scholar Atīśa (982–1054) in his *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment (byang chub lam gyi sgron ma, Bodhipathapradīpa).*[10] This text, which Atīśa wrote in 1042–1043 in Tibet at mTho-gling Monastery in the central Himalayas near Mt. Kailas, was originally composed in Sanskrit while Atīśa "simultaneously" dictated a Tibetan translation,[11] and came to have great influence in most Tibetan orders. In the dGe-lugs-pa order, Tsong-kha-pa considered it to be the root text for his *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path (lam rim chen mo),*[12] a text of paramount importance throughout the vast region of Inner Asia.

In the third through fifth stanzas of the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment,* Atīśa speaks of persons as being of three types:

Persons who seek for their own sake
The mere pleasures of cyclic existence
By whatsoever techniques
Are to be known as low.

Persons who seek merely their own peace—
Having a nature of turning their backs on the pleasures of cyclic existence
And turning away from sinful deeds—
Are to be called middling.

Persons who thoroughly wish
To extinguish thoroughly all sufferings of others
[Through inference of such] by way of the suffering
Included in their own continuum are supreme.[13]

This typology of three levels of beings—those of small, middling, and great capacity—served as the framework for Tsong-kha-pa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* and has formed much of the perspective from which his followers both wrote texts and viewed the world up to the present day.[14] Among Tsong-kha-pa's followers, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa Ngag-dbang-brtson-grus, a late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century scholar from the northeastern province of Tibet, formulated definitions for the three types of beings, basing his exposition on Atīśa's stanzas but, typical to his style, drawing on a wide range of Indian texts, sūtras, and treatises.

'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's presentation is found in the first chapter of his textbook[15] on Maitreya's *Ornament for Clear Realization,* in a section

supplementary to a presentation of the "openers of chariot-ways" *(shing rta srol 'byed).* 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa went to Central Tibet at age twenty-one and became abbot of the sGo-mang (Many Doors) College of 'Bras-spungs (Rice Mound) Monastic University at age fifty-three. Six years later, in 1707 (one year after a Mongolian chieftain, who happened to be one of his followers, murdered the regent and became "King of Tibet"), he returned to A-mdo (perhaps because it was safer than Central Tibet?), founding in 1710 a new monastic university to the southeast of sKu-'bum, another monastic university built in 1588 at the site of Tsong-kha-pa's birthplace. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's new institution, which was called bKra-shis-'khyil (Auspicious Circle), came to have great influence in that region; today, with about seven hundred monks, it is the largest functioning Tibetan monastic institution, although it is not included in the Tibetan Autonomous Region or even in Ch'ing-hai Province, but has been put in Gansu Province due to the radical redrawing of the map of Tibet after the Chinese takeover in the early 1950's. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's textbook literature became the standard texts for bKra-shis-'khyil Monastic University and was also adopted by the Go-mang College of Dre-bung Monastic University, replacing those by Gung-ru Chos-'byung in what must have been an interesting confrontation of monastic forces, given the inflated status that authors of textbook literature acquire due to being the leaders of the basic educational units in a very parochial society.

*Beings of Small Capacity*

'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa formulates the definition of a being of small capacity as "a person who seeks mere high status *(mngon mtho, abhyudaya)* in cyclic existence (*'khor ba,* saṃsāra)."[16] He draws this definition from Atīśa's third stanza ("Persons who seek for their own sake/The mere pleasures of cyclic existence/By whatsoever techniques/Are to be known as low"). 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa takes Atīśa's word "mere" in the phrase "the mere pleasures of cyclic existence" as eliminating the possibility that persons on this level seek anything beyond high status within cyclic existence—namely, the pleasures of this or future lifetimes as a human, demigod, or god within the round of birth, aging, sickness, and death—and he takes the mention of "for their own sake" as eliminating the possibility that such persons seek to bring about others' welfare.

Drawing on Asaṅga's *Compendium of Ascertainments (rnam par gtan la dbab pa bsdu ba, Nirṇayasaṃgraha/Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī),* 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa divides those of small capacity into three levels: low of the small, middling of the small, and supreme of the small. As the definition of a being of the low level of small capacity, he gives: "a person who seeks the mere happiness of this lifetime through nonreligious *(chos min)*

means."[17] He bases this description on Asaṅga's speaking of "the first of those partaking of desires" as "the lowest beings," and on his identification of them as "rash" *(bab col)* or lacking consideration of their own circumstances "due to partaking of desires through nonreligious means."

The definition of a being of the middling level of small capacity is "a person who achieves [the mere happiness of] this lifetime through religious and nonreligious means." As is clear in Asaṅga's *Compendium of Ascertainments,* the distinctiveness of persons on this level is that they also use religious means to bring about happiness in this lifetime. Asaṅga identifies them as both "rash" and "nonrash." Though the middling of the small use "religious" means in their pursuit of pleasure in this lifetime, Kensur Lekden, abbot of the Tantric College of Lower Lhasa just before he escaped Tibet in 1959, speaks of both the low and the middling of those having small capacity as beneath the count of religious practitioners due to their short-term motivation. In his *Meditations of a Tantric Abbot,* which I translated and edited from lectures that he gave in Wisconsin, he says:

> The small of the small do not practise any religion, but only strive for happiness in this present existence. Like animals, these beings do not achieve any virtue at all.
>
> The middling of the small engage in both religious and non-religious means to achieve happiness in the present for only themselves, not for their friends or even for their own future lives. Due to this low motivation, their activities cannot function as religious practice.[18]

Kensur Lekden was fond of relating stories from the oral tradition with such vividness that it almost seemed he had been present at these events, his great detail and sense of presence at once enlivening the account and suggesting that a great deal of it was fabrication (even his historical accounts did not take on the guise of objective reporting). On one occasion he told of a question put to Atīśa about the effects of using religious means with a motivation limited to improvement of the present lifetime. He reported that Atīśa's answer was that the effect was rebirth in a hell, because good karma was being consumed through directing its effects to the superficial affairs of this lifetime, thereby leaving bad karmas to manifest in the next lifetime. Whether or not his story relates an actual encounter with Atīśa, it is widely renowned in this tradition, and thus provides a boundary line between religious and nonreligious experience—and also between what can and cannot be included within the scope of Buddhist soteriology—as seen by this tradition. The crucial issue is motivation: the scope of the nonsoteriological is limited to the affairs of this lifetime, whereas the scope of the soteriological is more long term.

This perspective is seen in the definition of a being of the supreme level of low capacity: "a person who seeks the mere happiness of a future cyclic existence [i.e., a future lifetime] by only religious means, not emphasizing this lifetime."[19] Again, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's source is Asaṅga's *Compendium of Ascertainments,* where Asaṅga refers to this third level as "supreme" within the low and describes it "as partaking of desire without rashness due to solely [making use of] religious means." As Tsong-kha-pa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* says:

> A special being of small capacity, not being greatly interested in this life, is interested in and engages in the causes for the achievement of high states *(mtho ris)* in future lifetimes.[20]

The shift to a longer range perspective constitutes the first step in becoming a religious person.

Thus in this tradition the initial soteriological experience is of a change of motivation, in the sense not of turning away from happiness, but of recognizing that happiness needs to be achieved beyond the present lifetime and that appropriate means must be used to gain it. This requires turning away from sole involvement with the temporary pleasures of the present in order to ensure pleasure in the future. Instead of seeking pleasure through the direct activities of accumulating wealth, power, and friends, the ten virtues (abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive talk, harsh speech, senseless chatter, covetousness, harmful intent, and wrong views) are viewed as a better means for gaining a high position, accumulating wealth, and so forth in the long run. Without the motivation of improved future lives, these same virtues are not included within the practice of religion and cannot constitute initial soteriological experience. But with such a motivation, the virtues rescue, save, and hold one back from the frights of lower transmigrations as hell-beings, hungry ghosts, and animals.[21]

*Beings of Middling Capacity*

Just as persons become of supreme small capacity by extending the perspective that forms the basis of their behavior to include seeking relief from suffering in future lifetimes, so persons advance to middling capacity by extending their concern for the plight of suffering to the entirety of cyclic existence. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's definition of a being of middling capacity is "a person who is posited from the viewpoint of mainly seeking liberation for their own sake by way of turning the mind away from the marvels of cyclic existence."[22] Again, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa draws his definition from Atīśa's *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* ("Persons who seek merely their own peace—/Having turned their backs on the pleasures of cyclic existence/And having a nature of turning away from sinful deeds—/Are to be called middling").

'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa takes Atīśa's phrase "merely their own peace" as indicating that persons on this level (mainly)[23] seek only their own welfare; he takes the mention of their "turning their backs on the pleasures of cyclic existence" as indicating that they have overcome their attachment to the marvels of cyclic existence; and he takes "having a nature of turning away from sinful deeds" as indicating a nature of avoiding sinful activities at all times.[24]

About this level, Tsong-kha-pa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* says:

> A being of middling capacity, having generated regret with respect to all of cyclic existence, has taken as the object of attainment the liberation that is a release from cyclic existence and engages in the three trainings as the technique and path for that.[25]

Again, Kensur Lekden's description is more vivid:

> The best among those of small capacity have much to think about at this point. They wonder if attainment of a good future life is sufficient; they see that even if, through seeking the help of the Three Jewels, they attain the life of a god or human in their next lifetime, they will be born, grow old, become sick, and die. They arrive at the great understanding that merely gaining happiness in the next lifetime is not sufficient.
>
> A person exceeds the thought of a being of small capacity when he/she realizes that there is no peace until he/she no longer has to be reborn through the force of contaminated actions and afflictions. Progressing, he/she decides to obtain liberation from all types of cyclic existence and seeks the bliss of the extinguishment of suffering. Further, since the causes of contaminated actions are the afflictions of desire, hatred, and ignorance, he/she identifies these as foes and, by aiming to overcome them, generates the attitude of a being with middling capacity. Through proper meditation he/she can then be liberated from cyclic existence as a Foe Destroyer *(arhan)*.[26]

The shift in perspective that takes place with this second level of soteriological experience is more long range, for it takes into account not just the next lifetime (or a few future lifetimes) but the whole series of lifetimes and the precariousness of one's situation. Through practice of the path one is seeking to be rescued, saved, and held back from the entire uncontrolled round of birth, aging, sickness, and death in all of its forms.

The difference in the scope of the soteriological perspective—the range of that from which one is seeking to be rescued—comes from more accurately penetrating the nature of appearances. This is done by understanding the pervasiveness of the suffering of being under the uncontrolled influence of karma and afflictive emotions, and by understanding that any state within cyclic existence, no matter how pleasurable, will eventually lead to lower states, given the undeniable presence

of negative karma.[27] More accurate realization of the situation of cyclic existence leads to a reformation of motivation.[28]

On this level, soteriological experience is comprised predominantly of generating disgust for the entire round of uncontrolled rebirth. In the Autonomy School (*rang rgyud pa,* Svātantrika), which provides the predominant perspective of "grounds and paths" literature, this experience motivates realization of the emptiness and selflessness found among the attributes of the four noble truths, as well as development of a powerfully concentrated mind of meditation. In the Consequence School (*thal 'gyur pa,* Prāsaṅgika), which is the dGe-lugs-pa sect's own final system, it also motivates realization of the subtle level of emptiness, since the conception of inherent existence is considered to be the root of cyclic existence. As before, the advance comes not from turning away from happiness, but from recognizing a greater happiness and the means to achieve it. This greater perspective impels meditation on the actual status of persons and other phenomena—their emptiness of inherent existence—in order to undermine the afflictive emotions that are built on misperceiving that things inherently exist. Such meditation leads in turn to direct cognition of the true status of things, such that various levels of afflictive emotions are gradually removed from the mental continuum forever.

*Beings of Great Capacity*

Just as persons become of middling capacity by extending their motivational outlook to include seeking relief from all of cyclic existence, so persons advance to great capacity by extending their understanding of their own plight in cyclic existence to a realization that others are in a similar position. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's definition of a being of great capacity is

> a person who is posited from the viewpoint of seeking an exalted knower of all aspects *(rnam mkhyen, sarvākārajñāna)* [i.e., the omniscience of buddhahood] for the sake of the attainment of buddhahood in the continuums of other sentient beings by way of having come under the influence of great compassion.[29]

As before, he draws his definition from Atīśa's *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* ("Persons who thoroughly wish/To extinguish thoroughly all sufferings of others/[Through inference of such] by way of the suffering/Included in their own continuum are supreme").

'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa takes the phrase "by way of the suffering/ Included in their own continuum" as indicating how these persons infer others' suffering based on experience of their own. He takes Atīśa's mention of "others" as indicating their being intent on others' welfare, and his mention of "all sufferings" as referring to all levels of suffering

in cyclic existence, both gross and subtle. He takes "extinguish thoroughly" as indicating the extinguishment of obstructions together with their predisposing latencies *(bag chags, vāsanā),* and he takes "thoroughly wish" as indicating that these persons wish to relieve other beings of sufferings through a variety of techniques.[30]

On this level, practitioners are said[31] to be concerned about four defective conditions in all sentient beings: (1) cyclic existence, (2) the seeking of a solitary peace that is mere liberation for their own sake, (3) obstructions to liberation, and (4) obstructions to omniscience. The shift in perspective that takes place with this third and last level of religious experience is of far wider scope, in that others' suffering has become the primary concern. In a series of lectures at the University of Virginia, Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay spoke movingly of this universal responsibility:

> Sentient beings' births are limitless, without beginning. There is, hence, not a single being who has not been one's mother. At the time when they were our mother, they protected us with kindness just as our mothers of this lifetime did. It would be very bad if one had no thought to help these beings who have been one's mother and been very kind to oneself since beginningless time, but rather discarded them. For instance, take the case of a mother who was blind and crazy and who went walking along the edge of an abyss into which she could easily fall. If her only child, seeing this, remained playing and enjoying him/herself, this would be considered vulgar even in the world. In just this way, sentient beings, our aged mothers, are as if blind, not knowing the discarding of non-virtues and the adoption of virtues, how to practice the path. Although they want happiness, they do not know how to achieve the causes of happiness; although they do not want suffering, they powerlessly achieve its causes. Thus they are as if crazed. Moreover, because they have accumulated many non-virtues and continue to do so, they are walking alongside the abyss of bad transmigrations. Just as the child should try to stop his/her blind, crazed mother from wandering along the edge of an abyss, so we should develop the compassion that seeks to free sentient beings from this state in which, though wanting happiness, they do not know how to achieve its causes and hence are bereft of happiness, and though not wanting suffering, powerlessly achieve its causes again and again. It is not sufficient just to think, "How nice it would be if these beings were free from suffering"; rather one must assume the burden of doing this oneself.
>
> When one considers whether one has the capacity to free all sentient beings from suffering, one understands that at present one does not. Who has such a capacity? When one investigates, one sees that it is a buddha, a Supramundane Victor, one who has removed all faults and perfected all attributes. Thus beings of great capacity are those who generate an altruistic intention to become enlightened, thinking, "I will attain buddhahood in order to establish all sentient beings in the great liberation of the non-abiding nirvāṇa" *(mi gnas pa'i myang 'das, apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa).*[32]

Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay's use of the image of an only child's relationship to his or her helpless mother is typical of the teachings for inculcating this altruistic attitude. An ordinary attitude of filial concern is made extraordinary by extending its scope beyond its usual range, to all beings. Just as, on the level of the practices of a being of low and middling capacity, the quest for happiness is not forsaken but is reaffirmed with a higher goal, so here ordinary concern and compassion are not replaced by otherworldly attitudes but are extended far beyond their usual scope and are thereby transformed.

In the earlier phase, the scope of a practitioner's soteriological concern (and hence of spiritual experience) advanced from concern with suffering in a future life to concern with one's own cyclic existence in general; now it advances to concern with the plight of all sentient beings.[33] All beings are to be rescued, saved, and held back from all levels of suffering.

In terms of how such progress in an ever-widening perspective is made, first one passes from the level of ordinary low capacity to that of special low capacity by reversing the emphasis on the appearances of the present lifetime; this is done by realizing (1) that the present situation endowed with pleasurable features is valuable, (2) that one will not stay long in this life, and (3) that lifetimes as animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings are bereft of such fortunate circumstances.[34] Second, one passes to the level of a being of middling capacity by reversing the emphasis on the appearances of future lives, thereby developing an intention definitely to leave cyclic existence; this is done by reflecting on the inevitable effects of karma and the many varieties of suffering certain to be induced by one's own bad karma. It is necessary to meditate on (1) suffering, so that a wish to separate from cyclic existence will be generated; (2) impermanence, so that attachment to the mental and physical aggregates and to this life will be eliminated; and (3) selflessness, so that attachment to what belongs to oneself (including one's own body) will be overcome.[35] Through this process, an attitude seeking liberation can be generated in full form. Third, one advances to the level of a being of great capacity by developing the unusual compassion of being willing to take on the burden of freeing other beings from suffering and joining them with happiness. This is done by meditatively cultivating a sense of closeness with all beings and by becoming aware of their suffering, which is inferred from one's own situation as realized earlier on the paths of beings of small and middling capacity.

The paths of the three levels thereby serve as an integrated gradation of practices; it is not that they are mutually contradictory.[36] By removing the merely self-directed aspects of the paths of the lower levels, the paths of the three levels form a coherent, integrated whole, inducing advancement in soteriological perspective and spiritual experience. The

higher levels do not cancel the lower ones, but rather are built on the lower and continue to be reinforced by them, since beings of middling and great capacity need a continuum of favorable lives in order to complete their respective paths, and thus still need the practices of a being of small capacity to ensure good rebirths. Also, the great compassion that is so central to the motivation of a being of great capacity is founded on the realistic appraisal of one's own plight in cyclic existence, as understood through the practices of a being of middling capacity. Even more important, the realization of emptiness—detailed on the level of practice for a being of middling capacity for gaining liberation from cyclic existence—is central to achieving liberation from the obstructions to omniscience, which is the primary intent of a being of great capacity.

Thus for a being of great capacity, the practices of all three beings are intertwined: the lower ones both form the foundation for the higher and remain important aspects of continual practice. Hence the lower levels of soteriological concern cannot be dismissed as merely preliminary, in favor of more ultimate concerns; they remain an important aspect of a practitioner's intentionality throughout the entire scope of practice. The picture that emerges from considering such a broad range of practices is far richer than what is gained from considering only ultimate concerns.

## Classification of Beings

The doctrine of three types of beings forms an integrated series of practices for one person and also constitutes a typology supposedly applicable to all beings; anyone and everyone can be classified within this rubric. Most ordinary beings, including animals, are the low of the low capacity, since the scope of their concern is mainly limited to the temporary affairs of this lifetime; those who also employ religious means to achieve happiness in this lifetime are middling of the low; those who are about to generate a nonartificial form of an intention to leave cyclic existence in all its aspects are of middling capacity, as are all Low Vehicle practitioners right through to those who have attained the state of a Foe Destroyer. Those who have generated the unusual compassion described above are classified as beings of great capacity.

As a typology for humanity in general, this system has obvious faults. For instance, it cannot classify the most compassionate Christians as any of these, since they are not mainly seeking either (1) "an exalted knower of all aspects so that buddhahood might be attained in the continuums of other sentient beings," as a being great capacity would, (2) "liberation for one's own sake," as a being of middling capacity would, (3) "the mere happiness of a future lifetime," as a being of supreme low capacity would, (4) "the mere happiness of this lifetime through religious and nonreligious means," as a being of middling low capacity

would, or (5) "the mere happiness of this lifetime through nonreligious means," as a being of low low capacity would. The typology has similar but not so severe difficulties with Hindu systems, adherents to which, because of being considered not to recognize properly the process of cyclic existence, would probably be classified as beings of the middling low variety, outside the realm of religious practitioners.

Though the typology is aimed at including all beings, its failure to recognize other traditions even as religions suggests that it has a hidden agenda to exclude their practitioners from the count of religious beings.[37] This is not surprising in such a parochial culture, but such harsh exclusivity does appear to run counter to the advocacy of universal compassion. Followers quickly learn to bifurcate their minds so that they are deeply moved by calls to unbiased compassion and yet participate with vigor in exaggerated discrimination against other groups. Confronted with such exclusivity, I have sometimes wondered whether the message of universal compassion is being wrapped in a package of parochialism, or whether a message of parochial prejudice is being wrapped in the package of universal compassion.

Nevertheless, the typology says much about Indo-Tibetan Buddhist religious experience and can be used within such a framework. To summarize: The process of self-education, self-help, and self-rescue is a withdrawal from lower involvements—first from seeking pleasures only within the scope of the present lifetime, next from seeking the pleasures of cyclic existence in general, and finally from self-centeredness. At the same time, it requires an extension to higher involvements—first to concern with future lifetimes, next to liberation from all of cyclic existence, and finally to others' welfare. These are the "saving from" and "saving to" aspects of the path.

## Otto's *Mysterium Tremendum*

To gain a perspective on this Indo-Tibetan description of what it means to be religious, let us consider a radically different presentation: that of Rudolph Otto. I find that his work, though treating experience of the sacred within a theistic context, provides a means of unmasking facets of the *experience* of the practice of this Buddhist system. The seemingly great difference between the two systems has challenged me to notice descriptions of the emotionally harrowing nature of soteriological experience that are indeed to be found in the Tibetan tradition but that are buried under the format of a grand design of spiritual development, which easily fosters a sense that, with the proper will, certain practices will yield a predictable series of results. Let us first consider Otto's position in some detail, citing his text to a degree sufficient to get its flavor.

He describes religious experience as being of the *mysterium*—"that

which is hidden and esoteric, that which is beyond conception or understanding, extraordinary and unfamiliar"[38]—under five headings: awefulness, overpoweringness, energy or urgency, wholly otherness, and fascination.[39] "Awefulness" is analogous to fear but "wholly distinct from being afraid,"[40] a "terror fraught with an inward shuddering such as not even the most menacing and overpowering created things can instil,"[41] "the feeling of personal nothingness and submergence before the awe-inspiring object directly experienced."[42] Similarly, about "overpoweringness" he says:

> Thus, in contrast to "the overpowering" of which we are conscious as an object over against the self, there is the feeling of one's own submergence, of being but "dust and ashes" and nothingness. And this forms the numinous raw material for the feeling of religious humility.[43]

And:

> For one of the chiefest and most general features of mysticism is just this *self-depreciation* (so plainly parallel to the case of Abraham), the estimation of the self, of the personal "I," as something not perfectly or essentially real, or even as mere nullity, a self-depreciation which comes to demand its own fulfillment in practice in rejecting the delusion of selfhood, and so makes for the annihilation of the self. And on the other hand mysticism leads to a valuation of the transcendent object of its reference as that which through plenitude of being stands supreme and absolute, so that the finite self contrasted with it becomes conscious even in its nullity that "I am naught, Thou art all."[44]

Otto describes the third attribute of the *mysterium,* "energy or urgency," as "a force that knows not stint or stay, which is urgent, active, compelling, and alive."[45] The *mysterium* is also characterized by being the "wholly other," namely,

> that which is quite beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible, and the familiar, which therefore falls quite outside the limits of the "canny," and is contrasted with it, filling the mind with blank wonder and astonishment.[46]

In addition:

> The truly "mysterious" object is beyond our apprehension and comprehension, not only because our knowledge has certain irremovable limits, but because in it we come upon something inherently "wholly other," whose kind and character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we therefore recoil in a wonder that strikes us chill and numb.[47]

And:

> Mysticism continues to its extreme point this contrasting of the numinous object (the numen), as the "wholly other," with ordinary experience. Not content with contrasting it with all that is of nature or this world, mysti-

> cism concludes by contrasting it with Being itself and all that "is," and finally actually calls it "that which is nothing." By this "nothing" is meant not only that of which nothing can be predicated, but that which is absolutely and intrinsically other than and opposite of everything that is and can be thought. But while exaggerating to the point of paradox this *negation* and contrast—the only means open to conceptual thought to apprehend the *mysterium*—mysticism at the same time retains the *positive quality* of the "wholly other" as a very living factor in its over-brimming religious emotion.
>
> But what is true of the strange "nothingness" of our mystics holds good equally of the *sūnyam,* the "void" and "emptiness" of the Buddhist mystics. This aspiration for the "void" and for becoming void, no less than the aspiration of our western mystics for "nothing" and for becoming nothing, must seem a kind of lunacy to anyone who has no inner sympathy for the esoteric language and ideograms of mysticism, and lacks the matrix from which these come necessarily to birth.[48]

About the fifth and final characteristic, "fascination," Otto says:

> Possession of and by the numen becomes an end in itself; it begins to be sought for its own sake; and the wildest and most artificial methods of asceticism are put into practice to attain it. . . . The *mysterium* is experienced in its essential, positive, and specific character, as something that bestows upon man a beatitude beyond compare, but one whose real nature he can neither proclaim in speech nor conceive in thought, but may be known only by a direct and living experience. It is a bliss which embraces all those blessings that are indicated or suggested in positive fashion by any "doctrine of salvation," and it quickens all of them through and through.[49]

Thus,

> what we have here to point out is the unutterableness of what has been yet genuinely experienced, and how such an experience may pass into blissful excitement, rapture, and exaltation verging often on the bizarre and the abnormal.[50]

For Otto, the sacred is overpowering, charged with energy, awe-inspiring, and shocking/fascinating. His description finds so little resonance with the Indo-Tibetan presentation of the threefold typology of religious practitioners that we could easily conclude that his theistic perspective makes comparison impossible.

However, such language is not entirely lacking in the Tibetan cultural region; there are similar but not so prominent explanations that run counter to the seeming ease and fluidity of the steps in the Buddhist structure of the spiritual path. For instance, with regard to approaching realization of emptiness, the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Mongolian scholar bsTan-dar-lha-ram-pa describes a stage of fear that is eventually overcome through training:

An object that appears to a nonconceptual [sense] consciousness is the object conceived to exist inherently by a conceptual consciousness [in the sense that a conceptual consciousness assents to the object's appearance of inherent existence]. Therefore, related with this object are (1) the appearance of existing from its own side, which is to be refuted, and (2) the mere appearance [of the object], which is not to be refuted. [However,] before attaining the view [of the absence of inherent existence,] these two appear confused as one. When the view is found, these two [i.e., the appearance of existing from its own side and the mere appearance] are discriminated, and it is well renowned in the words of the wise that the fact that the mere appearance is not refuted is an important essential. When mountains, fences, houses, and so forth appear to ordinary beings, they appear in all respects to exist from their own side. Therefore, one should meditate until, destroying this mode of appearance, it is canceled in all respects for one's mind, and the fear, "Now there is nothing left over," is generated.

The generation of such fear is extremely rare. Kay-drup's *Opening the Eyes of the Fortunate* says: "If even arrival at the point of actual generation of fear and fright of the profound emptiness is extremely rare, what need is there to say that arrival at an actual ascertainment, which is an understanding of an emptiness through experience, is almost nonexistent?"

Therefore, greatly superior to the present-day philosophers, to whom not even an image of the mode of [an object's] existing from its own side has appeared, are those in earlier times who overextended what is refuted [in the view of selflessness and held that objects themselves are refuted].

There are reasons for not being frightened about emptiness. On the one hand, the stupid who do not know either the term or the meaning of emptiness are not frightened because they do not know any of its disadvantages or advantages. For example, the stupid who do not know about how one can fall from a horse are brave to mount a wild horse. On the other hand, those who perceive emptiness directly do not fear it because they lack the cause of fear, that is, the conception of inherent existence which is abandoned through seeing [the truth], like a being who has learned well the ways of controlling a wild horse.

Then, who fears [emptiness]? It is suitable for fear to be generated in those who have understood emptiness a little and are investigating whether or not such and such a phenomenon exists, for suddenly the phenomenon appears to their minds to be totally nonexistent. An example is a person who has understood a little but not completely how to mount a wild horse.[51]

Emptiness seems to be incompatible with appearance, in that when one understands it a little, objects no longer seem positable. Emptiness becomes a threat, like a wild horse—the analogy resonating with Otto's description of the sacred as overpowering, charged with energy, awe-inspiring, and shocking/fascinating. Indeed, in their analysis of objects, meditators must bring themselves to a point of fright; otherwise, the implications of emptiness—realization of which is diametrically op-

posed to the ingrained assent to a false status of objects on which all emotional turmoil is built—are missed. However, with acculturation, like learning horsemanship, the fear is removed, for one becomes able to make the distinction between the appearance that is negated—the object's seeming to exist from its own side—and the mere appearance of the object itself, which is not negated. The problem, therefore, is not with emptiness; it is with the untrained mind's perception of it as negating appearances—both of oneself and everything else.

Similarly, according to descriptions in Highest Yoga Tantra, when the fundamental innate mind of clear light dawns, it seems to leave no room for appearances, even annihilating oneself and thus generating fright. Since the final aim of the spiritual path, as presented in the Tibetan cultural region, is to manifest this most subtle level of mind and to remain within it, all the while manifesting dualistically in order to be of service to others, let us consider what that mind is in some detail, so that its significance and relationship to the broad spectrum of paths presented earlier can be discussed.

## The Fundamental Innate Mind of Clear Light in Highest Yoga Tantra

The mind of clear light is identified as the eighth in a series of increasingly subtle experiences that pervade conscious life.[52] It manifests at periods when the grosser levels of consciousness cease either intentionally, as in profound states of meditation, or naturally, as in the process of death, going to sleep, ending a dream, fainting, and orgasm.[53] Prior to its manifestation, there are several stages during which a practitioner experiences increasingly subtler levels of mind.

Through meditative focusing on sensitive parts of the body, the winds (or currents of energy; *rlung, prāṇa*) that serve as foundations for various levels of consciousness are gradually withdrawn, in the process of which one first has a visual experience of seeing an appearance like a mirage. Then, as the withdrawal is more and more successful, one successively "sees" an appearance like billowing smoke, an appearance like fireflies within smoke, an appearance like a sputtering butter-lamp when little wax is left, and then that of a steady candle flame. With the withdrawal of conceptual consciousnesses,[54] a more dramatic phase begins, at which point profound levels of consciousness that are at the core of experience manifest.

The first subtle level of consciousness to manifest is the mind of vivid white appearance. All coarse conceptuality has ceased, and nothing appears except this slightly dualistic, vivid white appearance, which is one's consciousness itself appearing as an omnipresent, huge, white, vivid vastness. When that mind is withdrawn, a more subtle mind of

vivid red or orange increase dawns; nothing appears except this even less dualistic, vivid red or orange appearance. The consciousness remains in this state for a period, and when this mind is withdrawn, a still more subtle mind of vivid black near-attainment dawns; it is called "near-attainment" because one is close to manifesting the mind of clear light. Nothing appears except this still less dualistic, vivid black appearance. During the first part of this phase of utter blackness, one remains conscious, but in a second phase one becomes unconscious in thick blackness.

When the mind of black near-attainment ceases, the three "pollutants" *(bslod byed)* of the white, red/orange, and black appearances have been entirely cleared away, whereupon the mind of clear light dawns. This is the most subtle level of consciousness; it is compared to the sky's own natural cast without the "pollutions" of moonlight, sunlight, and darkness, and is called the fundamental innate mind of clear light *(gnyug ma lhan cig skyes pa'i 'od gsal gyi sems).*

It is said that ordinary beings are so identified with superficial states that the transition to deeper states involves fear of annihilation; when the deeper states begin to manifest, beings panic, fearing that they will be wiped out, and due to this fear they swoon. As the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Mongolian scholar Ngag-dbang-mkhas-grub (1779–1838; also known as Kyai rdo mkhan po) says in his *Presentation of Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth (skye shi bar do'i rnam bzhag),*[55] at the time of the clear light of death, ordinary beings generate the fright that they will be annihilated. (This recalls Carl Jung's account of a Swiss mystic who, upon the dawning of great illumination, bashed his face into a large rock in front of him.) The fear-inspiring aspect of its manifestation accords with the oft-described awesomeness and sense of otherness that not only Rudolph Otto but much of world culture associates with types of profound religious experience.

Thus, both for the experience of emptiness and for that of this fundamental mind, the Buddhist tradition speaks in terms of a harrowing ordeal, full of dread. Also, although the threefold typology of practices may make it seem that the progression from one level to another is a smooth process of gradually acquiring a new outlook, the very structure of tiers suggests that the soteriological experiences of each succeeding level are not accessible and are even foreign to those on a lower level. The upper levels are outside the experience of those on lower levels—they are dramatically "other." One may study about the upper levels, but actually being a person of a higher level is outside one's experience. A realistic appraisal of one's own motivation yields a self-identification as very low on the scale; the typology gives the practitioner both a means to assess accurately his/her present condition and goals to strive toward. The typology itself thereby exerts an influence on the practi-

tioner, beckoning toward the development of a more profound perspective but also making it clear that those higher levels are foreign.

In contrast, the use of common concerns—first with one's own suffering and then with familial responsibility—to deepen and then broaden one's perspective suggests that the seeds of the higher levels are indeed common to all. Seen in this light, the higher attitudes are profoundly "other" in the sense that they are outside present manifestation, their implications being unbearable to the present personality structure; yet they are also present in a common seed-form which, through repeated training, can be extended in a process of development.

Similarly, with respect to the manifestation of the mind of clear light, the fact that this awesomeness is one's own final nature suggests that the otherness and fear associated with its manifestation are not part of its nature but are due to the shallowness of untrained beings. Much of the dGe-lugs-pa system of spiritual education, framed around the practices of beings of the three capacities, can be viewed as aimed at overcoming this fear of one's own most basic nature. The strangeness of our own nature is a function of misconception, in this case of the basic nature of the mind—specifically, the sense that afflictive emotions subsist in the nature of the mind[56] and the consequent identification with them, such that when their own basis starts to manifest, the fright of annihilation is generated.

That is how ordinary, untrained beings react to the manifestation of their own inner being, but a central tenet of this system is that training can overcome the sense of alienness. In the rNying-ma (Rnying-ma), or Old Translation, Order of Tibetan Buddhism, an accomplished yogi's experience of fundamental mind is even described as like "being set on mother's lap" *(ma pang bu 'jug).* The joy and sense of at-homeness that a child feels when (in a happy mood) he or she is set on mama's lap is an analog to highly developed yogis' sense of joyful naturalness when they identify in experience their own basic nature.[57] The at-homeness of the fundamental innate mind of clear light, when experienced by one who has overcome the initial, distorted fear and sense of annihilation, suggests that this fundamental mind is, in a sense, most common, most ordinary. Indeed, in rNying-ma literature, it is called "ordinary mind" *(tha mal pa'i sems).* In this way, the sacred (or an aspect of the sacred) is both awesomely "other" (when initially experienced) and intimately common (when recognized as the fundamental stuff of ordinary existence).

## Path

Emerging from these descriptions of the paths of beings of the three capacities and of the experience of the fundamental innate mind of clear

light is a perspective that beings are not familiar with their own nature and that training is required to overcome the obstacles preventing profound recognitions from being manifested. In Buddhist literature, the process of training is called the "path" (Skt. mārga), a term which has many meanings:

> way, road, path, course, passage, tract passed over; reach, range; scar, mark; path or course of a planet; search, inquiry, investigation; canal, channel, passage; means, way; right way or course, proper course; mode, manner, method, course; style, direction; custom, usage, practice; hunting or tracing out game; a title or head in law, ground for litigation; high style of acting, dancing, and singing; hinting or indicating how anything is to happen; section; anus, musk; a certain month; and a name of Viṣṇu.[58]

The goal-directed nature of many of these terms is reflected in its verbal root, *mārg,* which means "to seek, seek for; to hunt after, chase; to strive to attain, strive after; to solicit, beg, ask for; to ask in marriage; to seek through, trace out; to go, to move."[59]

In dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po's *Presentation of the Grounds and the Paths,* the term mārga (Tib. *lam*) is said to refer to something that opens the way to higher states:

> The definition of a path is an exalted consciousness—of one who has entered the path[60]—which serves to open a passageway allowing an opportunity to progress to the enlightenment that is its result.[61]

Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay brings the stilted language of the monastic textbook to life:

> For instance, opening a door reveals a passageway, allows a passageway. Or, in another way, if you are driving a car and there is a large boulder in the road, you would have to break it up into pieces and get it aside, thus opening up a passageway.[62]

Paths allow passage by removing obstacles. They also are tracks set down by earlier practitioners; Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay renders the point in everyday terms:

> What is a path? In the world we call the tracks *(shul)* of someone who went before and which serve as a way to be followed by those who go afterwards a "path." We know many kinds of paths—a road such as is used by cars, the tracks used by a train, a footpath one might follow when walking in the mountains. The term "path" is used here in a similar manner. We call paths those ways of proceeding of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Superiors of the past—the kinds of thought they generated—which is how those who wish to generate such realizations in the present and the future must proceed.[63]

In addition to removing obstacles and opening a way, "path" has the connotation of a tradition, the tracks worn into the ground by the pas-

sage of predecessors (which is a reflection of the meaning of mārga as "scar" or "mark," given above).

dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po lists the synonyms of "path" and an etymology:

> Path of liberation *(thar lam)*, exalted knower *(mkhyen pa)*, exalted wisdom *(ye shes, jñāna)*, clear realizer *(mngon rtogs, abhisamaya)*, mother *(yum, mātṛ)*, and vehicle *(theg pa, yāna)* are mutually inclusive synonyms. They are called "paths" because they cause one to progress to the status of liberation.[64]

Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay explains:

> A path of liberation *(thar lam)* is so called because it is a path that allows progress to liberation. An exalted knower *(mkhyen pa)* is so called because it is unmistaken knowledge of a method for proceeding to that enlightenment which is one's own object of attainment. Exalted wisdom *(ye shes, jñāna)* and clear realizer *(mngon rtogs, abhisamaya)* are the same. A path is called a mother *(yum, mātṛ)* because it produces or gives birth to that superior person which is its own effect. It is called a vehicle [or platform] *(theg pa, yāna)* because it is like a ladder. . . . All of these are called paths because they cause progress to the state of liberation. The word "liberation" here refers to both the liberation of a Foe Destroyer and the great liberation of a Buddha.[65]

Paths are goal-directed—leading to, producing, and ascending to a higher state.

Paths are also called "grounds" or "earths" *(sa, bhūmi)* in the sense that they serve as bases *(gzhi)* of high qualities of mind, just as the earth serves as the basis of innumerable activities. Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay elaborates:

> A ground acts as a basis of the many qualities that are its fruit. . . . Just as the ground [or earth] acts as a basis of orchards, forests, and so forth, so these consciousnesses act as the basis of many qualities of those who have entered the path; therefore, they are called grounds. . . . A ground serves as a basis not only for producing that which has not been produced but also for maintaining what has been produced as well as causing non-degeneration of what has been produced.[66]

The term "ground" (or the French *terre* used by David Seyfort Ruegg), which seems so awkward and forced in a discussion of spiritual paths in English, is, surprisingly, explained by Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay as employed because of its familiarity and ease of understanding:

> The reason why the paths of the three vehicles are called grounds is that they serve as bases of one's generating higher qualities in one's own mental continuum. If, in the designation of a name, one employs a term from common usage, then it is easily remembered and used. The term "ground" is known well, for if we are going, wandering, lying down, or

> sitting, our activities are involved with the ground [or earth]. Thus, through skill in means—using a term that is easy to understand—the term "ground" is used. The reason for designating the paths of the three vehicles as grounds is from the viewpoint of a similarity of function.[67]

Given the descriptions of spiritual practices as "paths" that are the tracks of predecessors leading to salutary aims, as "vehicles" or "platforms" reaching higher states, as "mothers" giving birth to high qualities, and as "grounds" that are the bases of growing favorable states of mind, it is clear that soteriological activities are viewed as goal-directed. The tantric system is said to use the fruit (or goal) as the path, in that a buddha's abode, body, resources, and activities are mimicked in the practice of deity yoga (i.e., the yoga of imitating an ideal being). Yet even in tantra, as described by Tsong-kha-pa and his followers,[68] it is emphasized that one is merely mimicking buddhahood in order more effectively to induce it.[69]

Paths are what make advancement possible; they allow passage forward by removing obstacles. The three levels of path rescue, save, and hold practitioners back from ever more subtle, counterproductive attitudes and rescue them toward ever more salutary concerns. The stages progress from short-term self-orientation to long-term self-orientation and then to other-orientation, each stage requiring a profoundly ethical transformation. Even the self-oriented stages are built on practices aimed at not harming others, and they culminate eventually, as a being of great capacity, in a commitment to helping others.

These phases all involve withdrawal from mental perspectives that are characterized by multiplicity and a fracturing of attention—namely, from being sunk in attachment to the manifold appearances and purposes of the presently appearing world and of future lifetimes, and in the inequality of self-cherishing. Carl Jung speaks to this fractured state and to religion's attempt to regather this energy:

> To be like a child means to possess a treasury of accumulated libido which can constantly stream forth. The libido of the child flows into things; in this way he gains the world, then by degrees loses himself in the world (to use the language of religion) through a gradual over-valuation of things. The growing dependence on things entails the necessity of sacrifice, i.e., withdrawal of libido, the severance of ties. The intuitive teachings of religion seek by this means to gather the energy together again; indeed, religion portrays this process of re-collection in its symbols.[70]

The over-valuation of objects that the ordinary consciousness suffers is reversed in this Buddhist system not only through its symbols (such as the central image of the contemplative Buddha withdrawn into internal contemplation) and rituals of severance of ties to the world, but also through a series of increasingly re-collective, meditatively reflective

exercises. The meditations that cause withdrawal of energy from these counterproductive states are realizations of qualities that are universal, or at least applicable to broad categories of objects—the nature of suffering of all the bad transmigrations as animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings, and then of all transmigrations in general; the nature of impermanence that pervades all commonly experienced phenomena; the nature of selflessness that pervades all phenomena; and the suitability of concern for all other beings.

These meditations, whose basic structure is withdrawal of a certain type of involvement and expansion of another, higher level with more homogeneous involvement, are consonant with the practice in Highest Yoga Tantra of withdrawing all the winds (energies) that support the grosser levels of consciousness so that the meditator can expand consciously controlled usefulness to the level of the fundamental innate mind of clear light. The mind of clear light is viewed as the stuff of appearances, all appearances being viewed as the manifestation *(rnam 'gyur)* or sport *(rol pa, līla)* of the mind of clear light. The mind of clear light is viewed as the universal substrate of appearance on this expanded level of awareness, which is obviously beyond self-centeredness and is a constant expression of the equality of self and other.[71]

In this way, the paths of the beings of the three capacities, by withdrawing energy (wind) and applying realization of universal qualities, can be seen as consonant with and leading to the unfolding of the mind of clear light. As explained earlier, the ascent of these levels is effected by a process that expands common perspectives beyond their usual range: the common concern for one's own present happiness is expanded to future lives; the common concern for happiness is expanded to a type of happiness that is beyond the vicissitudes of the rapidly changing nature of cyclic existence; the common concern for relatives and close friends is expanded to all beings, seen as close by virtue of similarity in type, in that both oneself and others equally want happiness and do not want suffering, and by virtue of having been friends in former lifetimes. Similarly, the common nature of mind—its luminous and cognitive essence—is expanded in the sense that it becomes a primary focus of attention whereby it, rather than its contents, becomes the dominant factor of experience and is seen as the stuff of all appearances. The earlier practices lead to the later, since the radical withdrawal of the winds that operate the grosser levels of consciousnesses cannot be effected without the withdrawals brought about by the preceding practices; otherwise, the practitioner's attached involvement with appearances would be too firm to allow conscious stoppage of these levels of mind.

In all these practices, energies are withdrawn and elements common to the ordinary mind are emphasized and expanded, but despite the

commonness of the basic element in the process, the experience of such withdrawal and expansion is fraught with uneasiness (except apparently for a few gifted persons).[72] Attempts to expand common attitudes of concern for one's own welfare and for friends are characterized by a sense of being alien because of the attachments that must be overcome to open the way for such new perspectives. Similarly, due to self-identification with mental and physical factors that are contrary to one's own nature, the manifestation of the mind of clear light—the inner nature of all conscious experience—can evoke such a great sense of being alien that it is feared as a force capable of annihilating oneself. Thus on many levels soteriological experience evokes a sense of dread—dread of the loss of directionality that pursuit of temporary pleasures affords, of the loss of permanence, of the loss of a solidly existent sense of self, and of the loss of one's very being—because it means facing what is awesomely other than one's present, very limited perspective. Nevertheless, after acculturation by means of paths of practice, the very insights that initially evoked a feeling of loss evoke instead the feeling of finding a lost treasure. As the Fifth Dalai Lama said about the experience of realizing emptiness:

> This initial generation of the Middle Way view is not actual special insight; however, like a moon on the second day of the month, it is a slight finding of the view. At that time, if you have no predispositions for emptiness from a former life, it seems that a thing which was in the hand has suddenly been lost. If you have predispositions, it seems that a lost jewel which had been in the hand has suddenly been found.[73]

What is experienced with a sense of loss at an early stage is later reexperienced with a sense of gain.

The frequent descriptions in rNying-ma literature, as well as in East Asian Buddhism, of identifying one's own actual nature, one's own face, suggest that the sense of at-homeness, of "being set on mama's lap," reveals religion not as something separate but as eventually most familiar.[74] One might even think that such an experience is not religious because it lacks the qualities of separateness and awe, but as we have seen, soteriological experience in this tradition is an acculturation to a state that is first viewed as foreign only because of the afflicted state of the practitioner. The experience of the fundamental innate mind of clear light as the "standard, everyday" stuff of basic mind indicates that this most profound of religious experiences in Indo-Tibetan tantrism is not of a realm of the sacred that is radically other; rather, it is one's own nature that is immanent in all consciousness but transcendent until its manifestation. When manifested it loses the distance of transcendence, much as in the case of the Vedānta dictum *Tat tvam asi* (You are that), in which an identification of oneself with ultimate reality, Brahman, is

made.[75] The diseased nature of oneself and the distance of Brahman, the ultimate, are canceled in the immediacy and closeness ("at-homeness") of recognizing one's own final nature.

Such lack of alienation is not limited to mature experience of the fundamental innate mind of clear light, for, as explained above, the practices of the beings of the three levels of capacity, though extensions of common experiences, pass through a phase of being alien but culminate in a sense of familiarity that results from cultivation of the path. The path is the bridge between an original, common endowment and a final expansion of such experience to a universal level; it opens a passageway by removing obstacles—namely, the inability to stand the implications of these profound states. This need for acculturation is reflected in the frequently repeated Tibetan oral teaching that "meditation" *(sgom)* is actually "familiarization" *(khoms)*—a matter of getting used to, or adjusting one's mind to, the implications of profound realizations.[76] With respect to the mind of clear light, the experience of this basic state as alien and dreadful is only relative to clinging to distorted notions about one's own nature. It is a function of a temporary inadequacy of the mind perceiving it—a failure that, according to this system, can be overcome through meditative cultivation of the path.

The fact of this final at-homeness, as well as the system's presentation of the compatibility of reason and experience of the sacred, could cause us to ignore the awe-inspiring, horrific, sometimes stultifying clashes with what seems to be one's own basic personality due to misidentifying the afflictive emotions as being the very fabric of the mind. However, the experience of the sacred (including not just the experience of the fundamental innate mind of clear light but also the path-experiences of beings of all three capacities) as dreadful, as so shattering that one cannot stand it, is not to be discounted, because when the sacred (i.e., these common experiences in their expanded meaning) impinges on a consciousness not yet ready for it, it is indeed dreadful, fraught with implications undermining and threatening distorted postures of personality.

To appreciate the significance of the path, we must realize that initial contemplation of (1) the plight of transmigrations as animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings, (2) the plight of cyclic existence in general, (3) the needs of the endless number of sentient beings, and (4) the implications of the basic nature of the mind is upsetting, because it is in such opposition to ingrained attitudes. When done effectively (and the tradition supplies many techniques to accomplish this), the impact of such contemplations on the pursuit of present and superficial pleasures—as well as on the pursuit of self-centered goals, which are so central to ordinary personality—is devastating in its demand for rearrangement of the personality. This is so because attachment is built on bias, and the extension of these more homogeneous attitudes requires a dramatic

withdrawal of the energy of attachment. Thus, even though the awe-inspiring nature of the path is experienced only relative to attachment to biased states (i.e., to viewing the afflictive emotions as the basic nature of the mind), it should not be ignored in favor of the neat layout of stages, which does not communicate the painful clash between intimately held attachments and these higher attitudes. Only when we see these implications can we place the path in the context of its soteriological task.

This discussion of a Tibetan Buddhist tradition has brought to the fore three phases of experience of the sacred—dreadful, overcoming obstacles, and totally "at-home." All three must be emphasized in order to convey even a minimally rounded picture of the path. Otherwise, the enormity and momentousness of the religious enterprise cannot be appreciated. Our starting point was an Indo-Tibetan typology of three types of beings, an obviously inadequate format for categorizing religious persons and religious experience in general. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith says:

> Every comprehensive Weltanschauung, insofar as it achieves the coherence at which it aims, therein reduces every alternative one: misunderstanding, distorting, its neighbors' world-view.[77]

There is no question that this Buddhist typology, due to its own exclusivistic agenda, is similarly distortive, but it has provided an avenue for exploring forms of Buddhist soteriology. That avenue has, in turn, yielded a view of religious experience as not limited to concern with the ultimate, but as having a broader range; as having its roots in common experience, but as involving an extension far beyond its usual bounds; and as initially being radically "other," due to unfamiliarity caused by personality distortions, but as finally being most familiar, due to acculturation that removes those distortions.

## The Mind of Clear Light and No-Path

From among the many regional Buddhisms, the dGe-lugs-pa presentation of the soteriological path contrasts most sharply with the no-path presentation found in Ch'an and Zen, where one is warned not to conceive of there being anything (such as levels of a path) to be produced. In the dGe-lugs-pa presentation, we do not find a perception of the need to undermine its own presentation of the path, as is so dominant in Ch'an/Zen. Theoretically, this stems from delimiting what is negated in the view of emptiness to inherent existence: wisdom does not refute the existence of objects in general, but rather a certain status of inherent existence; thus it is not necessary, after presenting a practice, to undercut it.[78] Since an absence of inherent existence does not contradict nom-

inal existence, the entire structure of the path can be laid out within the philosophically unassailable rubric of nominal existence. In this light, realization of emptiness is said to be impossible without first identifying the object of negation—namely, inherent existence.

Such delineation of the object of negation makes it unnecessary to engage in the seeming contradiction of undermining one's own position, as is so often done in Ch'an/Zen: first presenting what certainly looks like a path, next claiming there is no path, and then saying that everything is as it always was. I view the process of the path in Ch'an/Zen as negating something that makes it seem as if existence itself is negated, after which there is another stage when the unity of appearance and emptiness dawns. This progression suggests that what emptiness refutes is not existence itself, although it seems so to a practitioner, after which a correction is needed.

In a similar vein, even the dGe-lugs-pas admit that, without having realized emptiness, it is impossible to differentiate with valid cognition between inherent existence and existence. This would seem to make their path to realization of emptiness impossible, since they insist that the first step on the long road to realization is to recognize the object of negation, inherent existence, yet this cannot be done without first having realized emptiness! However, they attempt to get around this difficulty by holding that the initial recognition of the object of negation is accomplished not by valid cognition but by a correctly assuming awareness. The very great danger is that, because of the admitted inability to distinguish between existence and inherent existence prior to realizing emptiness, the mere presentation of a path to be generated would induce the false conception that the path, its production, and the meditator all inherently exist, whereby realization of the true nature of things would become more distant. Thus, although there are definite conceptual and systematic advantages to verbally differentiating between existence and inherent existence, this posture—a cornerstone of dGe-lugs-pa doctrine—is not without problems. From this vantage point, one can appreciate the seeming refutation of production in Ch'an/Zen, which, for a mind not given over to nihilism, allows the nature of the mind to shine forth.[79]

The delineation of the object of negation in dGe-lugs-pa and its nondelineation in Ch'an/Zen appears to be the fork in the conceptual road that sends the dGe-lugs-pas down the path of intricate conceptual elaboration and the adherents of Ch'an/Zen down the road of seemingly contradictory (but very profound) conceptual undercutting. Still, even in the dGe-lugs-pa system, a practitioner must withdraw the mind and concentrate nonanalytically in order to induce the subtler levels of mind required in Highest Yoga Tantra. Just as, in the Zen presentation translated in Carl Bielefeldt's chapter, it is said that one should not

imagine that there is anything to be produced, so in dGe-lugs-pa it is said to be impossible to manifest these subtler states when imagining that there is something to be produced. To understand the dGe-lugs-pa path, therefore, we must make a distinction between the study of the path-structure and what is required in meditation at certain points.[80]

Indeed, much as in the Ch'an/Zen dictum that there is nothing to be produced, if one seeks to produce a particular state of mind, one's imagination then prevents the manifestation of basic mind, which is found in the hiatus between states (but which, when found, is continuously realized to be the basis of all states). When one arrives at the point where such conceptually withdrawn meditation is required, as long as a path that needs to be generated is imagined, one cannot manifest a subtler level of mind. Also, when it manifests, it does not work on obstacles like a person removing a boulder or like hot on cold, but totally sublates the obstacle in a state utterly beyond it. It is said that in one moment of realizing emptiness with such a subtle mind, a practitioner overcomes the afflictive obstructions to liberation from cyclic existence that take two periods of countless aeons to overcome in the sūtra system.[81] Also, the third period of countless aeons is replaced by practices, achievable in the same lifetime, that blend this profound experience of emptiness with appearance, such that their utter compatibility is realized.[82] In this way, tantra becomes the quick path, with enlightenment becoming a viable, palpable goal within a practitioner's lifetime.[83]

When viewed as a whole, the variety of presentations in the regional Buddhisms—path and no-path in a great many forms—suggests that there is a danger of reifying particular states of mind to the point of preventing manifestation of the profound, due to not penetrating the impact of the dictum that there is nothing (inherently existent) to be done. In the context of meditative requirements at certain levels of the path, it is counterproductive to think that there is a state from which one is to be saved and a state to which one will be saved; thus *in this context,* a meditator's conceptualization of soteriology—the saving from and saving to nature of spiritual paths—would be inimical to enlightenment, even if not so either in general or on other levels of the path. This perspective may provide a way to see some degree of harmony between the path and no-path traditions of Buddhism.

## Notes

1. See Ninian Smart, "Soteriology," in Mircea Eliade, *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 13:418.
2. My source is oral explanations by Kensur Ngawang Lekden, abbot of the Tantric College of Lower Lhasa before 1959.
3. Ibid.
4. Alex Wayman (in an entry on "Buddhist Soteriology" in Eliade, *Encyclo-*

*pedia of Religion,* 13:423–426) makes this distinction between two soteriological goals, but he misidentifies the lower goal as "birth in heaven," whereas it is actually birth in any of the good transmigrations, i.e., as a human, demigod, or god.

5. In Tibet, a genre of monastic literature developed with the aim of getting a handle on the plethora of assertions on the nature, divisions, and mode of procedure of the spiritual paths presented in Indian Buddhism. Called "Grounds and Paths," it came to shape the manner in which much of Tibetan Buddhism views spiritual experience. For the sūtra path, the texts are for the most part written from the viewpoint of the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School *(rnal 'byor spyod pa dbu ma rang rgyud pa, Yogācārasvātantrikamādhyamika),* to accord with what is perceived to be the main system of Maitreya's *Ornament for Clear Realization.* In this class, and among the precursors of dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po's text, is one by rJe-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1469–1546). However, there is at least one such text written from the viewpoint of the Consequence School *(thal 'gyur pa, Prāsaṅgika):* bLo-bzang-rta-dbyangs (also known as bLo-bzang-rta-mgrin, 1867–1937), *Brief Expression of the Presentation of the Grounds and Paths of the Three Vehicles According to the System of the Perfection Vehicle, Essence of the Ocean of Profound Meaning (phar phyin theg pa'i lugs kyi theg pa gsum gyi sa dang lam gyi rnam bzhag pa mdo tsam du brjod pa zab don rgya mtsho'i snying po),* The Collected Works of Rje-Btsun Blo-Bzaṅ-Rta-Mgrin (New Delhi: Guru Deva, 1975), 4:65–190.

The genre of "Grounds and Paths" literature is not confined to sūtra but also extends to tantra. Two prominent instances of the latter are dbYangs-can-dga'-ba'i-blo-gros (eighteenth century), also called A-kya-yongs-'dzin, *Presentation of the Grounds and Paths of Mantra According to the Superior Nāgārjuna's Interpretation of the Glorious Guhyasamaja, A Good Explanation Serving as a Port for the Fortunate (dpal gsang ba 'dus pa 'phags lugs dang mthun pa'i sngags kyi sa lam rnam gzhag legs bshad skal bzang 'jug ngogs),* The Collected Works of A-kya Yoṅs-ḥdzin (New Delhi: Lama Guru Deva, 1971), 1:452–497; and a similar text by his student Ngag-dbang-dpal-ldan (b. 1797), also known as dPal-ldan-chos-rje, *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra, Presentation of the Grounds and Paths of the Four Great Secret Tantra Sets (gsang chen rgyud sde bzhi'i sa lam gyi rnam bzhag rgyud gzhung gsal byed),* (rgyud smad par khang edition, no other data).

6. Given the emphasis within the dGe-lugs-pa sect on individual colleges (even within larger monastic universities) and the general provincialism of Tibetan culture, it might seem impossible to speak of "standard" postures of the sect, but my meaning here points to generally recognizable, or at least representative, explanations.

7. The notable exception is the curriculum at the monastery of the Paṇ-chen Lama, bKra shis lhun po, where Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* is the topic of this initial long period of study.

8. For a translation into English, see Edward Conze, *Abhisamayālaṃkāra,* Serie Orientale Roma (Rome: Is. M.E.O., 1954).

9. Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy,* trans. John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1923; paperback rpt., 1977); esp. chap. 4, "*Mysterium Tremendum,*" and chap. 5, "The Analysis of *Mysterium.*" See Donald S. Lopez, Jr., "Approaching the Numinous: Rudolf Otto and Tibetan Tantra," *Philosophy East and West* 29, 4 (October 1979): 467–476; Lopez sharply contrasts Otto's view of the holy with the dGe-lugs-pa emphasis on the compatibility between reason and profound religious experience. My agenda is different; I am using

Otto's presentation to get at the awe-inspiring (and even dreadful) experience of the path, which is largely hidden by the dGe-lugs-pa emphasis on reasoning.

10. *P* 5343, vol. 103. An English translation with Atīśa's autocommentary is available in Richard Sherbourne, S.J., *A Lamp for the Path and Commentary* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983).

11. Sherbourne, *A Lamp for the Path,* pp. x–xii.

12. A translation of the first part of the section on special insight is available in Elizabeth Napper, *Dependent-Arising and Emptiness* (London: Wisdom, 1990). An English translation of the sections on calm abiding and special insight is available in Alex Wayman, *Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978; rpt. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979).

13. For Sherbourne's translation, see his *A Lamp for the Path,* p. 5. Our only substantial difference is with respect to the fifth stanza, which he translates as: "One who wholly seeks a complete end/To the entire suffering of others because/Their suffering belongs to his own [conscious] stream,/That person is a Superior." Sherbourne sees this level of person as understanding that others' suffering is included within their own mental continuum; this is both unlikely and differs from 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's more cogent interpretation of this stanza, given below.

14. See, for instance, Kensur Lekden's presentation in the first part of Tsong-ka-pa, Kensur Lekden, and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Rider and Company, 1980; rpt. Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1980), 17–21. The levels from the supreme of the low through those of great capacity can be viewed as three levels of ideal personhood—personality-goals to which practitioners aspire; see Grace Burford's chapter in this volume for an early Buddhist description of ideal persons. Using the approach of Peter Gregory's paper (Mārga Conference, UCLA, June 1988) about Tsung-mi's *p'an-chiao* (doctrinal classification), we can see that Atīśa's classificatory system similarly has (1) hermeneutical, (2) sectarian, and (3) soteriological functions, in that it (a) organizes diverse practices under one rubric, (b) legitimates the claim of this tradition to present the full teaching, and (c) provides a map of the Buddhist path.

15. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's *Decisive Analysis of the Treatise "Ornament for Clear Realization" [by Maitreya]: Precious Lamp Illuminating All of the Meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom (bstan gcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi mtha' dpyod shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i don kun gsal ba'i rin chen sgron me),* The Collected Works of 'Jam-dbyaṅs-bźad-pa'i-rdo-rdo-rje, vol. 7 *(ja),* (New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1973), 34.4–42.6; also (Sarnath: Guru Deva, 1965), 25.14–33.4. The running citations are to the Sarnath edition (hereafter *Sarnath*), since it is clearer, although occasionally the New Dehli edition (hereafter, *New Delhi*) is used as well (see notes 34 and 35 below).

16. "High status" refers to the elevated *(ud)* states of happiness of humans, demigods, and gods relative to animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings. *Sarnath,* 25.15: *'khor ba'i mngon mtho tsam don du gnyer ba'i gang zag de.* A definition *(mtshan nyid, lakṣaṇa)* in this system is not a verbal description; it is the actual object, viewed in one way as being the meaning *(don, artha),* whereas the definiendum is the name *(ming, nāma),* and in another way as a "defining property" that characterizes an object. For an interesting discussion of this topic, see Georges Dreyfus, "Some Considerations on Definition in Buddhism: An Essay on the Use of Definitions in the Indo-Tibetan Epistemological Tradition" (Master's thesis, University of Virginia, 1987).

17. *Sarnath,* 25.20: *chos min gyis tshe 'di'i bde ba tsam don du gnyer ba'i gang zag de.*

18. Tsong-ka-pa, Kensur Lekden, and Hopkins, *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism,* p. 17.

19. *Sarnath,* 26.10: *tshe 'di la ched cher mi byed par chos kho nas phyi ma'i 'khor ba'i bde ba tsam don du gnyer ba'i gang zag de.*

20. Tsong-kha-pa, *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path (lam rim chen mo),* cited from an unpublished translation by Elizabeth Napper, chap. 10, "The Three Types of Beings," 2. Kensur Lekden's description of the supreme of the small (Tsong-kha-pa, Kensur Lekden, and Hopkins, *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism,* pp. 17–18) is more vivid:

> The great of the small engage in virtue, seeking happiness, comfort, food, drink, resources, and so forth mainly for future lives. Because they practise not for the sake of others but for their own temporary welfare in cyclic existence—the beginningless round of birth, ageing, sickness, and death—they are the lowest among actual religious practitioners, but due to their longer perspective are included within the count of actual devotees.
>
> They have identified the cause and effect of actions as well as their own virtues and non-virtues. They know that in their next lifetime they will experience pleasures as gods or humans from virtuous deeds done in this lifetime and will experience sufferings as hell-beings, hungry ghosts, or animals from non-virtuous deeds done in this lifetime. They realize that at best this existence will not last more than a hundred years and that there are innumerable births in the future. Therefore, rather than seek their own welfare in this lifetime, which is so short, they begin to engage in religious practice for the sake of future lives.

21. dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po (1728–1791), recognized as 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's reincarnation, reformulated his predecessor's definition of a *person* of supreme small capacity in terms of the *path* of a being of supreme small capacity. (At the end of his presentation of the three types of persons, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa [*Sarnath,* 29.9] says, "The paths of the three persons are easily understood from those three definitions." dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po may have taken his cue from this suggestion.) In his *Presentation of the Grounds and Paths, Beautiful Ornament of the Three Vehicles (sa lam gyi rnam bzhag theg gsum mdzes rgyan,* The Collected Works of dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po, vol. 7, [New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1972], 422.3; this work was used extensively in Eugene Obermiller, "The Doctrine of the Prajnā-pāramitā as exposed in the Abhisamayālaṃkāra of Maitreya," *Acta Orientalia* [Lugduni Batavorum: E. J. Brill, 1932], 14ff.), dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po says:

> The definition of a path of a special being of small capacity is a thought posited from the viewpoint of mainly seeking mere high status within a future cyclic existence for one's own sake alone. Illustrations of this are, for instance, an awareness in the continuum of a being of small capacity that realizes the impermanence [i.e., precariousness] of death and an awareness of ethics in the continuum of a being of small capacity that is an abandoning of the ten non-virtues. These are called paths of a being of small capacity because—in dependence upon them—persons who possess [such awarenesses] in their continuum are caused to proceed to a state of high status [i.e., as a human or god].

dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po refines 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's definition by adding the word "mainly," thus suggesting that a person on this level is prin-

cipally involved in seeking happiness in a future lifetime but could also seek liberation from cyclic existence or even altruistic buddhahood, albeit in a minor way. As illustrations of the path of such a being, he gives an awareness realizing the impermanence or imminence of death and an ethical awareness involved in renouncing the ten nonvirtues, but he qualifies these illustrations as being "in the continuum of a being of small capacity." These awarenesses themselves are not necessarily limited to those of supreme small capacity; rather, they are suitable illustrations only if accompanied by the particular motivation of such a person.

22. *Sarnath,* 26.18: *'khor ba'i phun tshogs la blo log pa'i sgo nas rang kho na'i don du thar pa gtso bor don gnyer gyi cha nas bzhag pa'i gang zag de.*

23. Following dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po's refinement; see note 28 below.

24. However, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa points out that such a strict description does not hold true for all persons of middling capacity, since some beings on this level still engage in sinful deeds (*Sarnath,* 27.5):

> There are beings of middling capacity of indefinite lineage who, although they have an intention to leave cyclic existence which [is seen as] like a blazing fire, engage in sinful deeds through the force of afflictive emotions or [bad] friends. Not only that, but also there are beings of great capacity who do such.

As sources for such waywardness, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa cites Maitreya's *Ornament for the Great Vehicle Sūtras,* "Through the afflictive emotions oneself is destroyed, sentient beings are destroyed, and ethics are destroyed," and the *Nirvana Sūtra,* "Bodhisattvas are not as concerned with crazy elephants and so forth as they are with bad friends." He also cites the *Compilations of Indicative Verse (ched du brjod pa'i tshom, Udānavarga):*

> Do not company with sinful friends.
> When those not committing sins
> Acquaint with those committing sins,
> The qualm is generated that they will commit sins.

(This is likely the fourth line of the first stanza and the first three lines of the tenth stanza of the section called the compilation on intimate friends; see Gareth Sparham, *The Tibetan Dhammapada: Sayings of the Buddha* [London: Wisdom, 1986], 95–96.) The indefiniteness that is the result of not having reached an irreversible level of the path may be the reason for 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's using, in the definition of a being of middling capacity, the phrase "posited from the viewpoint of," which is usually stipulated in order to include exceptions.

25. Tsong-kha-pa, *Great Exposition,* trans. Napper (unpub.), p. 2.

26. Tsong-ka-pa, Kensur Lekden, and Hopkins, *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism,* p. 19. I have taken the liberty of changing my own translation as "he" to "he/she." With respect to the translation of *arhan arhant (dgra bcom pa)* as "Foe Destroyer," I do this to accord with the usual Tibetan translation of the term and to assist in capturing the flavor of oral and written traditions that frequently refer to this etymology. Arhats have overcome the foe which is the afflictive emotions *(nyon mongs, kleśa),* the chief of which is ignorance—the conception (according to the Consequence School) that persons and phenomena are established by way of their own character.

The Indian and Tibetan translators were also aware of the etymology of

*arhant* as "worthy one," since they translated the name of the "founder" of the Jaina system, Arhat, as *mchod 'od,* "Worthy of Worship" (see 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's *Great Exposition of Tenets,* ka 62a.3). In addition, they were aware of Candrakīrti's gloss of the term as "Worthy One" in his *Clear Words: sadevamānuṣāsurāl lokāt pūnārhatvād arhannityuchyate* (Louis de La Vallée Poussin, ed., *Mūlamadhyamakakāikās de Nāgārjuna avec la Pasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrtī,* Bibliotheca Buddhica IV [Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970], 486.5), *lha dang mi dang lha ma yin du bcas pa'i 'jig rten gyis mchod par 'os pas dgra bcom pa zhes brjod la* (*P* 5260, vol. 98, 75.2.2), "Because of being worthy of worship by the world of gods, humans, and demigods, they are called Arhats." Finally, they were aware of Haribhadra's twofold etymology in his *Illumination of the Eight-Thousand-Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra.* In the context of the list of epithets qualifying the Buddha's retinue at the beginning of the sūtra (see Unrai Wogihara, ed., *Abhisamayālaṃkārālokā Prajñā-pāramitā-vyākhyā, The Work of Haribhadra* [Tokyo: Toyo bunko, 1932–1935; rpt. ed., Tokyo: Sankibo Buddhist Book Store, 1973], 8.18), Haribhadra says:

> They are called *arhant* [= Worthy One, from root *arh,* "to be worthy"] since they are worthy of worship, religious donations, and being assembled together in a group, etc.
> (W9.8–9: *sarva evātra pūjā-dakṣiṇā-gaṇa-parikarṣādy-ārhatayarhantaḥ; P* 5189, 67.5.7: *'dir thams cad kyang mchod pa dang// yon dang tshogs su 'dub la sogs par 'os pas na dgra bcom pa'o.)*

Also:

> *They are called arhant* [= Foe Destroyer *arihan*] because they have destroyed *(hata)* the foe *(ari).*
> (W10.18: *hatāritvād arhantaḥ; P* 5189, 69.3.6: *dgra rnams bcom pas na dgra bcom pa'o.*)

(My thanks to Gareth Sparham for the references to Haribhadra.) Thus we are not dealing with an ignorant misconception of a term, but a considered preference in the face of alternative etymologies—"Foe Destroyer" requiring a not unusual *i* infix to make *ari-han—ari* meaning enemy and *han* meaning to kill, and thus "Foe Destroyer." Unfortunately, one word in English cannot convey both this meaning and "Worthy of Worship"; thus I have chosen what clearly has become the predominant meaning in Tibet. (For an excellent discussion of the two etymologies of Arhat in Buddhism and Jainism, see L. M. Joshi's "Facets of Jaina Religiousness in Comparative Light," L.D. Series 85, [Ahmedabad: L.D. Institute of Indology, May 1981], 53–58.)

27. Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay, commenting on dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po's *Presentation of the Grounds and Paths,* states the development of increasing scope clearly (unpub. lectures, University of Virginia, 1978, trans. Hopkins, p. 6):

> Beings of small capacity have concern for the sufferings that would take place in their own future lifetime; this is the limit of their thought, and thus it is not vast. Beings of middling capacity know that it will not help at all merely not to undergo the suffering of a bad transmigration in the next lifetime. They realize that even if they live at the peak of cyclic existence *(srid rtse, bhavāgra)* it is like living in a hell in a pot of molten copper, because they are about to fall into that. There is no difference between the peak of cyclic existence and a hell with respect to the suffering of pervasive condi-

tioning *(khyab pa 'du byed kyi sdug bsngal).* Even if, at the peak of cyclic existence, there is no suffering of mental or physical pain or suffering of change, when the actual meditative absorption that a person has in that state degenerates, then the person will fall from that state and be reborn in a state of the manifest suffering of physical and mental pain and the suffering of change. Thus, they understand that even in the best of rebirths within cyclic existence one has not passed beyond a state having the nature of the three sufferings. Hence, in order to attain a liberation in which none of these three sufferings will have to be experienced, persons of middling capacity cultivate paths such as realization of the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths and so forth. Their thought is vaster than that of beings of small capacity.

28. As before, dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po reformulates 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's definition of a person of middling capacity in terms of the path of a being of middling capacity (see note 22 above). In his *Presentation of the Grounds and Paths,* he says (423.1):

The definition of a path of a being of middling capacity is a thought posited from the viewpoint of mainly seeking liberation for the sake of oneself alone, from the viewpoint of having turned the mind away from the marvels of cyclic existence. An illustration of a path of a being of middling capacity is, for instance, an awareness in the continuum of a being of middling capacity that realizes the sixteen [attributes of the four noble truths], impermanence and so forth. These are called paths of a being of middling capacity because in dependence on them persons who possess them in their continuum are caused to progress to the state of liberation.

29. *Sarnath,* 27.17: *snying rje chen po'i gzhan dbang du gyur pa'i sgo nas sems can gzhan rgyud la sangs rgyas thob phyir du rnam mkhyen don du gnyer ba'i cha nas bzhag pa'i gang zag de.*

30. About this level, Tsong-kha-pa's *Great Exposition* (trans. Napper [unpub.], p. 3) says:

A being of great capacity, due to being under the other-power of great compassion, for the sake of extinguishing all the sufferings of sentient beings has taken Buddhahood as [his or her] object of attainment and trains in the six perfections, the two stages [of Highest Yoga Tantra, i.e., the stages of generation and completion], and so forth.

31. See Kensur Lekden's description of persons of great capacity in Tsong-ka-pa, Kensur Lekden, and Hopkins, *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism,* p. 20.

32. Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay, unpub. lectures, trans. Hopkins, p. 7.

33. As before, dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po reformulates 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's definition of a person of great capacity in terms of the path of a being of great capacity (see note 29 above). In his *Presentation of the Grounds and Paths,* he says (423.3):

The definition of a path of a being of great capacity is a thought that is posited by way of seeking [to attain] an exalted knower of all aspects for the sake of other sentient beings' attaining buddhahood from the point of view of having come under the influence of great compassion. Illustrations of a path of a being of great capacity are the great compassion or the pure unusual altruistic attitude in the continuum of a being of great capacity. These are called paths of a being of great capacity because in dependence

upon them persons who possess them in their continuum are caused to progress to unsurpassed enlightenment.

34. *New Dehli,* 31.1–31.4.
35. Ibid., 30.4–30.8.
36. Tsong-kha-pa's *Great Exposition* (trans. Napper [unpub.], pp. 5–6) makes this point clearly:

Since the paths of the other two types of beings are included in complete form within the stages of the path of a being of great capacity, those two [i.e., the paths of beings of small and middling capacity] are parts, or branches, of the path of the Great Vehicle. . . . Here, one is not being led to the path of a being of small capacity who takes as the object of attainment merely the happiness of cyclic existence nor to that of a being of middling capacity who takes as the object of attainment mere liberation from cyclic existence for his or her own sake alone. Rather, having taken some of the paths shared with those two as prerequisites for being led to the path of a being of great capacity, they are to be taken as branches of the deeds of the path of a being of great capacity.

Later, Tsong-kha-pa explains what these shared paths are (ibid., pp. 10–11):

At the time of [the practices of] a being of small capacity, one contemplates the way in which the harm of the suffering of the bad transmigrations befalls one, and at the time of [the practices of] a being of middling capacity, one contemplates the way in which even if [one attains] high status there is suffering and there is no bliss of peace. Then, through meditation within inferring one's own experience with respect to other sentient beings who are close to one, this serves as a cause for generating love and compassion, and, from that, there is generation of the mind of an altruistic intention to become enlightened. Therefore, training in the thoughts shared with beings of small and middling capacity is a technique for generating a non-artificial mind of an altruistic intention to become enlightened, and it is not the case that one is being led on some separate path.

37. Much as in the case of the doctrine of beings "whose wholesome roots have been eradicated," discussed in Robert Buswell's chapter in this volume, the possibility of being excluded exerts an influence on practitioners to keep from falling into such a group by engaging in practice. In this way, the effect of the seemingly *exclusionary* doctrine is to induce persons to practice so that they can be *included* within the group.
38. Otto, *Idea of the Holy,* p. 13.
39. These are the section headings of chaps. 4 and 5 of ibid.
40. Ibid., p. 13.
41. Ibid., p. 14.
42. Ibid., p. 17.
43. Ibid., p. 20.
44. Ibid., p. 21.
45. Ibid., p. 24.
46. Ibid., p. 26.
47. Ibid., p. 28.
48. Ibid., p. 29.
49. Ibid., p. 33.
50. Ibid., p. 37.
51. bsTan-dar-lha-ram-pa, *Presentation of the Lack of Being One or Many (gcig du*

*bral gyi rnam gzhag legs bshad rgya mtsho las btus pa'i 'khrul spong bdud rtsi'i gzegs ma),* Collected gsung 'bum of Bstan-dar Lha-ram of A-lak-sha, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Lama Guru Deva, 1971), 425.1ff.

52. The material on the levels of consciousness is drawn from Lati Rinbochay's and my translation of a text by dbYangs can dga' ba'i blo gros; see Lati Rinbochay and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Rider, 1979).

53. The traditional way of explaining the process of proceeding from grosser to subtler states is in the context of dying. In Highest Yoga Tantra, the explanation of the stages of dying and of the physiological reasons behind them is based on a complicated theory of winds (or currents of energy) that serve as foundations for various levels of consciousness. Upon the serial collapse of the ability of these "winds" to serve as bases of consciousness, the internal and external events of death unfold. The same experiences also can be induced by consciously withdrawing the winds in the practice of Highest Yoga Tantra.

54. In the Guhyasamāja system of Highest Yoga Tantra, as presented in Nāgārjuna's *Five Stages (rim lnga, Pañcakrama),* conceptual consciousnesses are detailed as being of eighty types, which are divided into three classes. The first group of thirty-three conceptions is composed of conceptual consciousnesses that involve a strong movement of "wind" to their objects—conceptions such as fear, attachment, hunger, thirst, compassion, acquisitiveness, and jealousy. The second group of forty conceptions is composed of conceptual consciousnesses that involve a medium movement of "wind" to their objects—conceptions such as joy, amazement, generosity, desiring to kiss, heroism, nongentleness, and crookedness. The third group of seven conceptions is composed of conceptual consciousnesses that involve a weak movement of "wind" to their objects—namely, forgetfulness; mistake, as in apprehending water in a mirage; catatonia; depression; laziness; doubt; and equal desire and hatred. Although the difference between the first two groups is not obvious (at least to me), it is clear that in the third group the mind is strongly withdrawn; on the ordinary level of consciousness, the three groups represent increasingly less dualistic perception.

55. This work is found in Ngag-dbang-mkhas-grub's *Collected Works* (Leh: S. Tashigangpa, 1973), vol. 1, 466.2. Cited in Lati Rinbochay and Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth,* p. 47.

56. This is a central theme of Enni's exposition of Zen as presented in Carl Bielefeldt's chapter in this volume, in which Enni indicates that the source of suffering is the misidentification of afflictive emotions as the very nature of the mind. Enni says:

> Those injured by this spirit of the afflictions, believing that their deluded thoughts are the original mind and taking delight in the seeds of desire, revolve through the four [kinds of] rebirth in the three evil [destinies].

The importance of faith in the basic purity of mind is clear in Han Ki Doo's paper on sudden awakening (Mārga Conference, UCLA, June 1988), in which he quotes Hui-neng as saying, "Don't doubt that your own mind is Buddha." In contrast, the dGe-lugs-pas stress reasoned affirmation of the basic purity of the mind, and frequently reiterate their conviction that well-reasoned faith is far stronger than unreasoned faith. However, this dictum may not take into account the very great power and effectiveness of faith that is built not on reasoning but on inklings, on glimpses; such faith seems to be a central element in leading a practitioner, consciously and unconsciously, to profound experience.

57. The analogy recalls Freud's descriptions of drives to return to earlier pleasant states, and of his "insight" into the meaning of the infant Jesus on Mary's lap, staring at his mother, as a depiction of a basic unconscious thrust of the religious enterprise. For Freud such insights undermined religions' claims, whereas I have yet to decide whether the metaphors are using the religions or the religions, the metaphors. Consider, for example, Jung's description of the search for wholeness as disguised in the form of incest (*The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971, second printing 1974], vol. 16, 471 [the latter is the paragraph number used for coordination between editions]):

> Whenever this instinct for wholeness appears, it begins by disguising itself under the symbolism of incest, for, unless he seeks it in himself, a man's nearest feminine counterpart is to be found in his mother, sister, or daughter.

Taken Jung's way, the image of the mother indicates a yearning for wholeness, which is naturally associated with the mother because of warm childhood experiences. Thus the primary motivating force is the striving for wholeness; the feminine image is the medium of its expression.

58. Vaman Shivaram Apte, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Poona: Prasad Prakashan, 1957), 1264–1265.

59. Ibid., p. 1264.

60. This is a necessary qualification to eliminate similar experiences by those who have not reached a level of a formal path, i.e., any of the five paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, or no more learning.

61. dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po, *Presentation of the Grounds and the Paths,* 428.3.

62. Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay, unpub. lectures, trans. Hopkins, p. 46.

63. Ibid., p. 8.

64. dKon-mchog-'jigs-med-dbang-po, *Presentation of the Grounds and the Paths,* 428.3.

65. Den-ma Lo-chö Rin-bo-chay, unpub. lectures, trans. Hopkins, p. 8.

66. Ibid., p. 26.

67. Ibid., p. 18.

68. I am drawing on H. H. the Dalai Lama, Tsong-ka-pa, and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Tantra in Tibet* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977; rpt. Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1987).

69. This does not seem to be the case in certain rNying-ma and certain East Asian teachings, in which it is more that one is uncovering an enlightenment already primordially present.

70. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung,* vol. 6, p. 422.

71. See the final chapter, "Union of the Old and New Translation Schools," in The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1984), 200–224, esp. 210–221.

72. About sudden enlightenment in the rNying-ma school, see Khetsun Sangpo, *Tantric Practice in Nyingma* (London: Rider, 1982), 187.

73. Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngak-w̄ang-l̄o-sang-gya-tso (1617–1682, also known as Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho), *Instruction on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment, Sacred Word of Mañjushrī (byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i khrid yig 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi zhal lung),* (Thimphu: kun-bzang-stobs-rgyal, 1976), as found in Hopkins' translation in "Practice of Emptiness" (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1974), 17.

74. In a different context, Wilfred Cantwell Smith has said that religion is, in a sense, most common, its isolated separateness being a fabrication of our current secularism. In his presidential address at the 1983 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Smith said ("The Modern West in the History of Religion," *JAAR,* LII/1, 9):

> For the fact is that reasonably well-informed perceptive awareness of the history of our planet over the past thirty or so millennia makes clear that modern Western secularism is an aberration; and that its attempt to interpret religion as some sort of extra in human life is dogmatic, is ideological eisegesis. The notion that human nature and truth are fundamentally secular, are the norm, from which most human beings have, whether for good or other reason, deviated, is sheer projection.
>
> By this I do *not* mean that humanity is, rather, fundamentally *homo religiosus.* That is an error that further illustrates my thesis, by its perpetuating the idiosyncratic outlook that the Modern West has defensively constructed. It took us some time to detect this. The concept "religion" has itself been developed by Western secularism as naming something that is supposedly over and above the standard everyday. Religion is in fact not something special, the historian can now see; it is secularism that is odd. "Religion" is a secularist notion, a conceptual element in that particular worldview—but a misleading one, setting up a dichotomy that secularists need in order to justify their own separate peculiarity, but normal people do not and cannot. The dichotomy is retained, in inverted form, in that phrase *homo religiosus.* Actually, there is rather just plain *homo sapiens,* and then a minority of those not quite *sapientes* enough to have sensed what kind of universe we live in and what kind of being we are.

Admittedly, Smith is not making the points that I am making, but it strikes me that once it is held that religion is not separate, its nonseparateness must be grounded in a reality that is at the very root of existence, as is the case with the fundamental innate mind of clear light. Smith's point is not just that at a different cultural period religion was not separated out; he is suggesting that this is the case *in fact*—that religion is rooted in "what kind of universe we live in and what kind of being we are."

75. For a lucid exposition of this dictum, see Śri Sureśvarācārya, *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi,* trans. S. S. Radhavachar (Mysore: University of Mysore, 1965).

76. A study of usage of the term "forbearance" *(bzod pa, kṣānti)* for levels of the path, to indicate an overcoming of nonfacility with profound doctrines, would add to the force of this point.

77. Smith, "The Modern West in the History of Religion," p. 6.

78. For an illustration of the tension created by not delimiting the object of negation of śūnyatā, see Robert Gimello's chapter in this volume on the "irresolvable opposition" and "creative tension" between śūnyatā and mārga.

79. See Grace Burford's chapter in this volume, in which she documents an early Buddhist position in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* that for reality to manifest "no view" is needed.

80. Although I am aware of the tendency in dGe-lugs-pa training to endless, conceptual proliferation, it is unwarranted to assume that because the path-structure is complicated, no one ever actually meditates it. There is a small but significant number of persons who, after much arduous study over many years, practice what, at superficial reading, seems to be a hopelessly complicated series of paths. This is not to say that *all* complicated structures are actually

practiced; my point is that the assumption that *none* of them can be practiced springs from a lack of awareness of cultures that put as least as much energy into these topics as we do into learning about football, road complexes, and so forth—and from a lack of appreciation of the fact that, for some people, the content of these highly elaborate presentations has an inner dynamic impelling them toward practice. Anne Klein's chapter in this volume provides insights into the dynamics of a very high level of the path—dynamics that take such presentations out of the realm of mere abstract proliferation of high states; I am referring specifically to her explanation of the theme of the bodhisattva's developing greater realization of the compatibility between appearance and emptiness, method and wisdom, conventional and ultimate truths.

81. This means that the first through the seventh bodhisattva grounds are traversed in an instant. Such sudden progress can be viewed as an extension of the sudden abandonment discussed in Collett Cox's chapter in this volume. The function of the path of seeing to remove artificially acquired obstructions and that of the path of meditation to remove innate obstructions are combined in one instant of a very subtle, and thus very powerful, consciousness realizing emptiness. Still, as Dan Stevenson discussed in his paper on the pathless path posited by T'ien-t'ai Chih-i (Mārga Conference, UCLA, June 1988), concrete stages are presented for what is experienced in a "non-successive, non-gradualistic, instantaneous, complete, and, it would seem, utterly 'stageless'" manner. This cultivation of levels leading to the path of seeing is in contrast to Alan Sponberg's presentation (Mārga Conference, UCLA, June 1988) of the path of seeing as essentially a noncultivative insight into the truth, after which cultivation is begun. Still, the point here is whether the presentation of levels of the path to be produced in practice is counterproductive to generating the manifestation of the essential nature of the mind. It is perhaps in this vein that Tibetan scholars sometimes speak of the inappropriateness of superimposing the vocabulary of stages, such as the bodhisattva grounds, on such a stageless experience, even though this is frequently done.

In the rNying-ma tradition, such dramatic cleansing of appearance is called the "utter eradication of cyclic existence" and is compared to arriving in a land of gold in which stone (suffering) is utterly unfindable. In rNying-ma, it can be brought about in a "sudden" or "simultaneous" manner through an encounter with a deeply realized being (see John McRae's chapter in this volume on encounter dialogues in Chinese Ch'an), such that in one session a practitioner passes from a pre-path-of-accumulation level either to the path of seeing or to buddhahood.

82. It is in this phase of the path that the obstructions to omniscience are overcome in the Guhyasamāja system of Highest Yoga Tantra. In his chapter in this volume, Padmanabh Jaini raises the intriguing question of just how nonafflictive ignorance is overcome in the classical Abhidharma systems. The specific practices implemented at this point in Highest Yoga Tantra address this topic, which came to be a focal issue in Mahāyāna treatises.

83. This is sometimes called "enlightenment in one lifetime in one body." Atīśa is said to have been quizzed by Tibetans—who probably were testing him to see whether he knew the most profound doctrines—about whether there was any such thing as enlightenment in one lifetime in one body. He answered that there was enlightenment in one lifetime but not in one body. The Tibetans are said to have assumed, therefore, that he did not know of this most profound doctrine of Highest Yoga Tantra. However, one of the Paṇ-chen Lamas is reported to have explained that Atīśa was making a very refined answer

because, to achieve enlightenment in one lifetime, it is necessary to achieve a second body made of "wind" and mind, at which point the usual body can be either retained or discarded. Thus enlightenment can be achieved within one lifetime, but it is necessary to develop a second body. See Ngag dbang dpal ldan (born 1791), *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra, Presentation of the Grounds and Paths of the Four Great Secret Tantra Sets (gsang chen rgyud sde bzhi'i sa lam gyi rnam bzhag rgyud gzhung gsal byed),* (rgyud smad par khang edition, no other data), 54.6. This story shows how literally the doctrine of "enlightenment in one lifetime in one body" is taken in this tradition, in contrast to the Tendai tradition of "realization of buddhahood with this very body" *(sokushin jōbutsu),* discussed in Paul Groner's chapter in this volume.

# Mental Concentration and the Unconditioned: A Buddhist Case for Unmediated Experience

ANNE C. KLEIN

Amazing, stunning, marvelous doctrine
Secret of all the perfect buddhas
That everything is born from the birthless
When that very birth is unborn.

—*The Secret Essence*[1]

## Overview

Theories about the relationship between the born and the unborn, or the conditioned and unconditioned, animate much of Buddhist writing, ritual, and meditation. The way such apparently antipodal categories coexist and make each other possible is a central issue in the literature of Indo-Tibetan Mādhyamika. Its descriptions of a path to enlightenment frame the issue largely in epistemological terms: How can the ordinary mind, variously described as conditioned, deluded, or defiled, experience a state that is unconditioned, omniscient, and pure? Any Buddhist position on this question depends, in good measure, on which of these paired antinomies it emphasizes.

As a case in point, Tibetan sūtra literature such as the Dge-lugs-pa material discussed below emphasizes the incremental progression from a deluded to an omniscient state, characterized by a movement from conceptual to direct experience of the final or ultimate nature of things. The Rnying-ma Rdzogs-chen, in contrast, emphasizes purification of adventitious defilements to reveal the buddha-nature, considered the actuality of every mind *(sems gyi chos nyid, *cittadharmatā)*. The culmination of both Dge-lugs-pa and Rnying-ma paths can be described as "unconditioned" in some sense, but the process by which this state is actualized, descriptions of the state itself, and the particular conundrums entailed in reaching it are framed quite differently. For Dge-lugs-pas, "unconditioned" is above all a description of the emptiness that is the *object* of the nondualistic wisdom consciousness. This emptiness is an unqualified voidness, a mere negation *(prasajyapratiṣedha, med dgag)*. The mind that knows this unconditioned emptiness is, like all minds, condi-

tioned. This is a curious point, and one we shall refer to again. For Rnying-ma, the significant "unconditioned" is not a mere negation but an affirming negative *(paryudāsapratiṣedha, ma yin dgag).*[2] Unlike in Dge-lugs-pa, the "unconditioned" can in special circumstances also describe a *subject,* a consciousness spontaneously and beginninglessly endowed with certain qualities.

From these positions, different types of path structures take shape. For Dge-lugs-pa, knowledge of the "unconditioned" rests on the availability of that unconditioned object to experience, and especially on the possiblity of perceiving it "immediately." The mind itself, even the omniscience of a buddha, always remains a "conditioned phenomenon." However, as we shall see, the term "conditioned" here refers to the mind as an impermanent, momentary phenomenon (even when its moments are all of the same type, as in the case of a buddha's omniscience); it is not necessarily a statement about the mind's amenability to epistemological shifts due to changing external or internal "conditions."

The mind most completely experiences the unconditioned emptiness when it knows it "immediately." One criterion of such immediate or direct perception is that the object be known without the intervening presence of an image *(arthasāmānya, don spyi)* that characterizes all forms of conceptual thought *(kalpanā, rnam rtog).* In describing the Dge-lugs-pa position on such cognition, I also make use of select Rnying-ma material in order to introduce something of the Tibetan Buddhist context in which Dge-lugs-pa positions take shape.

When some of these same issues are placed in the frame of our own contemporary intellectual traditions, broader questions can also be raised. Most significantly, when we investigate mārga literature, we confront some of the fundamental issues that divide us, as contemporary Euro-Americans, from the worldview in which it was conceived. How are we to understand a literature whose fundamental theses are anathema to most contemporary Western intellectual traditions? For example, both Dge-lugs-pa and Rnying-ma, and Buddhism generally, claim that one can become a knower or self whose agency is free from the constraints of language (compare Lacan), who gains some form of unmediated knowledge (compare Kant), and—most antithetical of all—that this knowledge and its object are unconditioned by particularities of history and thus accessible in the same form, albeit through different means, to all persons regardless of cultural or psychological particularity (compare Foucault). In looking at one particular Buddhist tradition's way of handling mārga theory, I will suggest some connections between the different ways in which "they," the voices of tradition, and "we," the inheritors of modernity, find mārga theory a problematic endeavor.

The primary focus of this chapter is the way in which Dge-lugs-pa sūtra-path literature frames and attempts to "solve" the tensions between conceptual and nonconceptual, and between conditioned and nonconditioned, as well as the role that various forms of mental concentration play in this resolution. Secondarily, I suggest how this material plays into Dge-lugs-pa assumptions about the unmediated and presumably universal nature of this experience.

To this end I examine the changing juxtapostion of concentration and insight, and insight's own shift from conceptual to nonconceptual. Some of this material is very technical, for Dge-lugs-pa represents one of the extreme poles of Buddhist scholasticism, but I hope the larger issues remain in view, and that the summarizing statements which close each section provide an accelerated pathway through the discussion for those who would dispense with the Geshe's-eye view of the issue. (Scholars, like Buddhists, may be gradualists or subitists—important evidence that we are dealing with a fairly fundamental set of human preferences here, not just with religious esoterica.)

*Objections to the Dge-lugs-pa Perspective*

For Dge-lugs-pas, the most significant conundrum of the path has to do with how conceptual conditioning yields a nonconceptual experience of the unconditioned. This can be read as a particular instance of the more general conditioned-unconditioned problematic already noted. The response most characteristic of Dge-lugs-pa sūtra literature is to invoke two different mental gestures that must themselves be reconciled: opening consciousness to encompass the spacelike, unconditioned emptiness; and withdrawing the mind from sense objects through cultivating various stages of concentration *(dhyāna, bsam gtan)* and absorption *(samāpatti, snyoms 'jug)*. The intertwining of these epistemological styles or meditative strategies culminates, at buddhahood, in the ability to have immediate cognition of sense objects and their emptinesses at one and the same time. This is how Dge-lugs-pa, for all its emphasis on the purely empty status of the unconditioned, valorizes an attitude that the editors of this volume refer to as "at once less alien from the world of ordinary human concerns and more sensitive to the presence of the transcendent in that world."

The particular claims Dge-lugs-pa makes in its description of the path were often disputed in Tibet. Some of the most telling objections derive from Rnying-ma Rdzogs-chen's quite different formulation of the relationship between path and goal, conditioned and unconditioned. Whereas Dge-lugs-pas sutra literature must explain how conceptual thought, which is both conditioned and conditioning, can lead to nonconceptual experience of the unconditioned, Rdzogs-chen reflects on how the manifold qualities of the buddha-nature, which is uncondi-

tioned and permanent, can be conjoined with the mind, which is impermanent, and on the precise relationship of the buddha-nature, which is ever-present and unchanging, to the temporally locatable achievement of enlightenment.[3]

Briefly, three important premises shape the Dge-lugs-pa problematic, all countered by the Rnying-ma material considered here: (1) Emptiness, the unconditioned, becomes an object of consciousness on the path; (2) this object is a mere negative *(paryudāsapratiṣedha, med dgag)* with no positive qualities, in part because (3) the teachings on emptiness associated with the Perfection of Wisdom are to be taken literally. There are other important differences, of course, but these suffice to frame the issues at hand. Because emptiness is considered an object, and one that is accessible only upon careful analysis, Dge-lugs-pa must conceive of a complementary relationship between conceptual analysis and a nonconceptual, nondualistic experience of emptiness. Moreover, because such experience is not readily available to ordinary persons, a path for gradual development of this ability must be laid out. In contrast, Rnying-ma holds that although the Perfection of Wisdom sūtras find it necessary to identify the unconditioned, they never say to take it *as an object.*[4] Moreover, the buddha-nature must be experienced as not only pervading objects but as a form of subjectivity as well.[5]

Dge-lugs-pas often equate the emptiness which is a mere negative with the buddha-nature, but Mipham crystallizes the views of much of earlier Rdzogs-chen literature when he urges that these not be confused and observes that the buddha-nature is not a mere emptiness devoid of qualities.[6] According to Mipham, the former view is given to beginners as an antidote for mistaken views of the self; the final view takes literally, not the Perfection of Wisdom teaching on emptiness of the second wheel, but the buddha-nature teachings of the third wheel.[7] These cannot be understood merely through expounding upon emptiness.[8] Although like emptiness in being unconditioned, this buddha-nature is not a mere negative because it possesses spontaneously established *(anābhaga, hlun grub)* good qualities, none of which are appropriate to a mere negative.[9] Such qualities, like the buddha-nature itself, are not created through practice, and thus a developmental path is not appropriate. Indeed, the claim that an impermanent cause can give rise to an unconditioned nonproduct is, for Mipham, nothing short of amazing.[10]

This latter, as we have seen, is not precisely the Dge-lugs-pas' claim, since they emphasize epistemological rather than ontological terms in this context, and since the status of the mind as a conditioned phenomenon does not change in the process of the path. However, the gradual progression that Dge-lugs-pa does describe is entirely counter to Mipham and Rdzog-chen's perspective. Mipham is emphatic that the buddha-nature is not something to be achieved incrementally. It is not

like a seed that eventually becomes a sprout, destroying itself in the process,[11] nor does it exist sometimes and not others. Moreover, being unconditioned, buddha-nature is unaffected by whether or not a person is enlightened. When the adventitious defilements that obscured it are purified, the buddha-nature *gets the name of an effect,* but it is not newly produced.[12]

These opening positions can also be read as an instance of the tension in Buddhism between "the impulse toward enlightement and the drive to purification" noted in this volume's introduction. Because Dge-lugs-pa's sūtra soteriology expressly equates buddha-nature with the emptiness that must be realized, and because emptiness itself, being a mere negative, is utterly devoid of qualities, Dge-lugs-pa must theorize how positive qualities such as concentration participate in the nondualistic and immediate cognition of this very special type of object, and the stages by which a mind that is both concentrated and cognizant of emptiness—the two gestures mentioned above—is developed. Thus the categories associated with mental calming and concentration become central to Dge-lugs-pa claims regarding the "immediate" cognition of the "unconditioned" at crucial stages of the path. This way of framing mārga gives rise to the issues discussed below.

Such considerations alone would give the topic of concentration significant claims on our attention, and yet the importance given to the topic of concentration in Buddhist traditions is not the only reason to take interest in it. The Buddhist discussions of path summarized here are, above all, reflections on epistemology. If we wish eventually to relate Buddhist path and epistemological rubrics to Western categories, calming and concentration are among the most difficult to place. This is especially true of those forms associated with the higher levels of "calming" the mind—calm abiding *(śamatha, zhi gnas)* itself, the four concentrations *(dhyāna, bsam gtan),* and the four formless absorptions *(samāpatti, snyoms 'jug).* By examining these, it may be possible to access something unique to Buddhist understandings of human mental systems. More specifically, I want to suggest that Dge-lugs-pa makes its case for what it considers an unmediated and culturally autonomous cognition partly by the way it finds that mental calming and concentration (1) ameliorate the tensions and differences between conceptual thought and direct perception and (2) reduce the experienced power of conditioned objects over their conditionable perceiving subjects.

*Calming and the Path*

To this end, I will analzye two segments of the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika path structure wherein a claim for unmediated perception is elaborated: namely, the first and the sixth bodhisattva grounds. It is said that a union of calm abiding and special insight makes possible the ini-

tial direct cognition of emptiness (i.e., the first instance of unmediated and errorless cognition), and that the special concentration of the fifth ground makes possible the surpassing perfection of wisdom accomplished on the sixth ground, which in turn results in the uncommon absorption of cessation. In both cases, a particular form of mental calm is integrated with a nonconceptual cognition of emptiness; at that time any impingement on direct perception by conceptual thought is said to be removed. Concentration is also instrumental in the special union of method and wisdom that characterizes the seventh ground. This is the first time the bodhisattva can enter into direct, nondualistic cognition of emptiness *without first accessing conceptual imagery.* "Immediacy" as the absence of reliance on mental imagery now gains a new force.

In discussing the particular role of concentration at each of these junctures, I will highlight Dge-lugs-pa exegeses of Candrakīrti's classic discussion of ten bodhisattva grounds in his *Entrance to the Middle Way (Madhyamakāvatāra, Dbu ma la 'jug pa),* partly because these comprise a particularly detailed description of a gradualist path and partly because they introduce a category of calming, the uncommon absorption of cessation, that partakes of wisdom in such a way as to highlight the relationship between concentration and wisdom, the two central features of the gradual path.

Since the unconditioned emptiness is first directly cognized on the path of seeing, the first bodhisattva ground, and since this cognition is described as a wisdom consciousness, it might seem that any tensions or issues associated with differential mental functionings are resolved by this point on the path. To a certain extent they are. For example, special insight and calm abiding are united, and no conceptual or other perceptual errors are operative. However, the nature of this relationship again becomes an issue on the sixth ground, where a further integration of calming and wisdom is considered imperative. At this time one gains an enhanced perfection of wisdom which in turn makes possible a new type of mental focus known as the uncommon absorption of cessation (**āsadhārananirodhasamāpatti, thun mong ma yin pa'i 'gog snyoms),* a category unique to Prāsaṅgika, and probably to Dge-lugs-pa Prāsaṅgika. In Tsong-kha-pa's *Illumination of the Thought, An Extensive Explanation of [Candrakīrti's] "Entrance to the Middle Way" (Dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rgya cher bshad pa dgongs pa rab gsal),*[13] and in later Dge-lugs-pa commentaries on Candrakīrti by Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, and 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, the uncommon absorption of cessation forms a crucial part of mental functioning on the sixth ground.

Before passing on to this, we might note that, even in this Buddhist context, the suggestion of unmediated, universally accessible knowledge is a bit anomalous. After all, Tibetan scholarship distinguishes the

higher philosophical systems from the lower (with Prāsaṅgika generally seen as the highest) in good measure by the extent to which the former understand the mental subject as constructive of its own experience. However, in contrast to contemporary theories (Derrida's *différance* comes immediately to mind), the participation of thought and direct perception in such constructions is considered erroneous precisely to the extent that it contradicts or interferes with cognition of that which is unconstructed, namely, with the unconditioned, emptiness. (Failing to take account of *différance,* by contrast, presumably interferes with an understanding of *différance,* not with something which transcends it.)

In Dge-lugs-pa Prāsaṅgika, unmediated, unmistaken direct perception must circumvent the errors of thought as well as those of ordinary direct perception. Thought, by its very nature, fails to properly distinguish its referent *(*adhyavasayaviṣaya, zhen yul)* from an image *(arthasāmānya, don spyi)* of the same. Ordinary direct perception, though valid regarding the specific characteristics of its object, is deceived by the false appearance of solidity, continuity, and so forth of that object. Most human experience involves an inchoate combination of conceptual and direct cognitions; consequently, although ordinary direct perception is free from the errors of thought, it tends to be closely associated with them and in any case, according to Prāsaṅgika, is not free from errors of its own. Thus, even though ordinary direct perception is unmediated in the sense of having no intervening image between subject and object, it is not said that anyone having direct perception of, for example, an orange would have an identical experience of that orange.

Why, then, is the experience of emptiness implicitly presumed to be the same for everyone? It is curious and notable that such universality is implied in the context of a system that recognizes ordinary direct perception, like conceptual thought, to be a product of the vagaries of human experience. However, there are ethical and epistemological differences posited between ordinary direct perception and the direct experience of emptiness that address this issue, albeit obliquely. Whereas ordinary direct perception can be associated with a nonvirtuous, virtuous, or neutral mind (someone wants to steal an orange, someone wants to give it to a friend), the nondualistic experience of emptiness is possible only for a virtuous mind. Still more significant, however, are the ways in which direct perception of emptiness is said to be structurally different from ordinary direct perception.

We can discern at least three senses in which the direct cognition of emptiness is "unmediated," and only one of these is true of ordinary direct perception as well. First, as already mentioned, this is a time when emptiness is known without an intermediary mental image. The direct experience of emptiness is also unmediated in that there is no experienced difference between subject and object. Despite Dge-lugs-pa

insistence on calling emptiness an "object" of the wisdom consciousness, it is a nondualistically apprehended object, which signifies, among other things, that the mind is not being "conditioned" by its object as other forms of direct perception are conditioned by their objects.

Although emptiness is an object, it is not considered an object condition *(ālambanapratyaya, dmigs rkyen),* and there appears to be some debate about whether or not the consciousness observing emptiness "is produced in the aspect of emptiness" *(rnam ldan du skyes)* in the way that an eye consciousness is produced in, or takes on, the aspect of its object. The point is that the mind observing emptiness does not depend on emptiness in the manner that sense consciousnesses depend on their objects.[14] Finally, although mental preparation is crucial to the gradual development of this state, direct cognitions of emptiness are considered immediate and unconditioned insofar as such cognition does not perpetuate characteristics of the "causal" states leading up to it, such as mental imagery, coarse analysis, or a division between subject and object.[15]

All three of these—the absence of a mental image (necessarily the product of one's own unique experience),[16] the mind's not being produced through response to a specific object, and the mind's nonreplication of characteristics associated with cognitions that precede and lead up to direct cognition of emptiness—suggest that the usual ways in which experience is particularized no longer operate. Each of these attributes of "immediate" cognition tends toward a universalization of the cognitive experience, even if it does not do away with objections to claims for complete universality.

The experience of emptiness is also "universal" in the sense that the epistemological parameters for its cognition are rather narrow, apparently allowing for little diversity of experience. As already noted, emptiness is considered a mere negative, and thus it arguably will not imprint data on the mind. Further, we have seen that emptiness is not an "object condition" with causal efficacy. There are different ways to directly perceive an orange—in the shade, in full light, when hungry, and so forth—but only one way to fully understand emptiness. In Prāsaṅgika, the claim of unmediated, errorless direct perception is made only in connection with an object whose appearance is nondeceptive, and the only such object is emptiness. (Perhaps, to paraphrase Tolstoy, it is felt that all errors are different, but all completely correct perception is correct in the same way.) By implication, the mind that realizes emptiness inferentially or directly experiences union with it has an experience that can be considered universal. Moreoever, both in this state and subsequent to it, cultural as well as conceptual conditioning lose their characteristic power to govern experience.[17] Just how complete such cognitive independence might be is a question that underlies much of this discussion.

In the path approaching buddahhood, thought processes are undone. Thus, although Buddhist and contemporary Western intellectual traditions share a general emphasis on the constructed nature of experience as well as an acute awareness of the limitations intrinsic to language and other conventions, they seem to reach diametrically opposite conclusions regarding the possibility of an unmediated, complete, universally available and objective perception, at least within their different understandings of these terms. Buddhist philosophers do this in part by the kinds of epistemological distinctions noted above, and in part by elaborating dimensions of mental experience that receive relatively little attention in the West, such as the various forms of mental calming discussed below. To come to terms with specific Buddhist claims about cognition,it is thus vital to consider not only the role of concentration but the relationship it bears to other mental functions with which it is associated.

## The First Bodhisattva Ground

### *Calm Abiding and Nonconceptual Analysis*

Classic Indian Mahāyāna literature emphasizes that calm abiding is foundational to special insight. For example, Śāntideva's *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds (Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra, Spyod 'jug),* 8.4:

> Having understood that the afflictions are overcome
> Through special insight thoroughly endowed with calm abiding,
> One should first seek calm abiding.[18]

In Tibet, Dge-lugs-pa sūtra-system texts paid particular attention to the relationship between analytical meditation *(dpyad sgom),* an analogue of insight, and stabilizing meditation *('jog sgom),* an analogue of calm abiding. This interest arose at least partly because of their claim that analysis can induce a state which is a union of calm abiding and special insight. (Many of us would agree that analysis induces attention and focus, but that it actually stills the mind so as to reduce conceptualization is a different and more difficult proposition.)

This claim, important as it was to the fourteenth-century Tsong-kha-pa and subsequent writers, did not originate with them. Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa notes that, at least as early as the twelfth century, the Ka-dam-pa Geshe Dol-pa-shes-rab-rgya-mtsho (1059–1131) stated that only a moment intervenes between the attainment of special insight and a union of calm abiding and special insight.[19] Tsong-kha-pa was slightly more radical in maintaining that, from its very first moment, a special insight on emptiness comprises a mind in which calm abiding and special insight are united.[20] In other words, the experience of the

"unconditioned" depends on a particular consonance of subject and object, and this requires a mind of unusual composure, intensity, and clarity, the very qualities associated with calm abiding and higher levels of concentration.

Still, even when "united," calm abiding and special insight remain functionally distinct. They are not one entity *(ekadravya, ngo bo gcig);* whatever is one is not the other. Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa points out that those who say these become one at the time of attaining a bodhisattva ground are mistaken; the two mental gestures of withdrawing the mind in one sense and expanding its horizons in another are entwined, not blended. Nonetheless, the oral tradition offers a delicate caveat here: whereas in earlier stages of the path, analytical and stabilizing meditation are different, they later become "as if" one entity insofar as they neither manifest different functions nor require different forms of effort.[21]

The point for us is that accounting for the association of analysis with the first-ground bodhisattva's nonconceptual wisdom realizing emptiness is seen as a taxing and critical matter, as evidenced by the difficulty of drawing clear boundaries around each of these functions. Having said that analysis brings on a state of calm abiding on emptiness, a profound compatability between these should be supportable in some way. One area of compatability is that "calming" or "concentration" in part signifies that the mind is no longer involved with thought and thus, arguably, is temporarily beyond the reach of at least conceptual carriers of cultural experience. Thus when "analysis" is, however problematically, assimilated to the function of concentration, it is brought one step farther from its initial function of conditioning.

On the uninterrupted Mahāyāna path of seeing, attained simultaneously with the first bodhisattva ground, the mind combines stabilizing with analytical meditation; that is, it unites calm abiding with special insight. This is a mind for which all conceptual, dualistic appearances have vanished. In the absence of conceptuality and duality, the mind cannot engage in any new analysis.[22] Thus the case has to be made either that wisdom is compatible with a collapse of conceptual cognition, or that the analytical understanding associated with wisdom can occur in the absence of conceptual functioning. The Dge-lugs-pa exegesis favors the latter position. Nonconceptual experience of emptiness is an essential characteristic of all the bodhisattva grounds. In describing these grounds, therefore, Dge-lugs-pa finds it crucial to wed the element of analysis to the element of nondualistic cognition.

In Dge-lugs-pa literature, a Mahāyāna path of seeing is defined most succinctly as "a Mahāyāna clear realization of truth."[23] Somewhat less succinctly, but making the same point about the cognitive import of this

stage, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa calls it "a clear realization of the truth which is a cessation of the two extremes of existence and peace."[24]

To be a "clear realizer" of emptiness is a function of special insight. Since Dge-lugs-pa frames emptiness as an object that becomes available to direct perception only when analysis has prepared the way, it becomes crucial that Dge-lugs-pa account for the analytical capacity even of the nonconceptual direct cognition of emptiness. The function of calming is both the problem and the solution. It facilitates an absence of conceptual movement *and* it also enhances special insight and analysis.

How can there be nonconceptual analysis? I do not think this is merely a logistic or syntactical corner into which Dge-lugs-pa soteriology has painted itself, although it may be that in part. At the same time, it raises broader questions for us about the nature of knowledge: Can the mind know something undistortedly? If so, would all minds know undistortedly in the same way? The Dge-lugs-pa insistence that emptiness is an object and that there is nondualistic cognition of it raises the further question of how a mind can "know" an object without simultaneously distancing itself from that which is known. Is a state of powerful calm a necessary, if insufficient, factor for accomplishing this? If so, why? In Kantian terms, the above asks whether it is possible to know fully and undistortedly just what is, and whether such could occur if subject-object distinctions are collapsed. In Lacanian terms, this discussion probes the possibilty of a knowledge that, unlike the knowledge that operates through language, does not signify a loss or distance from that which it knows.

Much of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist epistemology outside Prāsaṅgika considers full and undistorted cognition to qualify direct perception in general, labeling it a "complete engager" *(*vidhipravṛttibuddhi, sgrub 'jug gi blo)*. Direct perception, in this view, takes on the aspect *(ākāra, rnam pa)* of an object and thereby gains undistorted awareness of it. This completeness, in addition to the absence of an intervening mental image, is what most fundamentally distinguishes direct perception from conceptual thought. Thought always accesses its object by eliminating what is other than that object; for this reason thought is labeled an eliminative or "partial engager" *(*apohapravṛttibuddhi, gsel 'jug gi blo)*.[25] On entering the path of seeing, emptiness, until then known only conceptually and thus through partial engagement, is first engaged with fully.

Calm abiding is the lowest level of mental quiescence that can support a direct cognition of emptiness. Thus the direct experience of emptiness is concomitant with a form of meditative equipoise *(samāhita, mnyam bzhag)*. This term literally means "placed equally"; oral scholarly

tradition understands the "equally" to signify that when the mind is in equipoise, consciousness and object are coextensive (and thus equal) in the sense that any emptiness is necessarily the object of an uninterrupted Mahāyāna path of seeing, and any object of such a consciousness (on the first ground) is necessarily an emptiness.[26] Because conceptual investigation *(vitarka, rtog pa)* and analysis *(vicāra, dpyod pa)* are part and parcel of the first concentration, calm abiding, too, can be understood as compatible with these. The various factors that are one entity with the consciousness cognizing emptiness are also said to cognize it. These twenty-three factors include two of the changeable mental factors *(*anyathābhāvacaitta, sems byung gzhan 'gyur),* namely, investigation and analysis.[27] A path of seeing gained on the basis of calm abiding or the first concentration can therefore be understood as compatible with analysis, since it itself contains factors of investigation and analysis—and all the more so since analysis itself induces calm abiding.

However, the path of seeing is most commonly gained in conjunction with the fourth concentration, not calm abiding.[28] At this level, unlike with the lower forms of concentration, conceptual investigation and analysis are regarded as "faults of fluctuation" *(g.yo ba'i skyon).*[29] In what sense, then, if any, can we speak of analysis at the time of a direct cognition of emptiness as associated with a mind of the fourth concentration? To discuss this is to reflect on the extent to which this tradition finds a specific cognitive experience to be separable from conceptual meditation, as well as from the nonconceptual habits of perception which affect, and in that sense mediate, ordinary direct perception. Without such meditations, I would argue, cultural and personal conditioning become so ephemeral as to be virtually nonexistent. Thus, to investigate Dge-lugs-pa claims regarding cognition of emptiness at the fourth concentration or higher is to probe the parameters of their view of experiencing the unconditioned.

Dge-lugs-pa oral tradition on this issue opines that (1) the mind on the uninterrupted path of seeing is engaged in analytical meditation, and (2) analysis associated with direct cognition of emptiness is to be distinguished from the ordinary form of investigation and analysis incompatible with the fourth concentration.[30] In the former, there is no sense that the observing mind is here and the observed emptiness is there. Unlike analysis that reflects "this is" or "this is not," the nonconceptual wisdom, like an eye consciousness, is said to engage its object fully, but unlike an eye or other sense consciousness, is able to ascertain all that appears to it. The implication is that this ascertainment is considered a form of analysis. Moreover, although there is no movement of thought, this mind is said to comprehend the reasons through which emptiness itself became known. It is thus deemed possible to have analytical meditation without conceptualization. The result is a dissipation

of nonconceptual conditioning and of the appearance of inherent existence associated with ordinary sensory perception.

Indeed, the oral scholarly tradition takes the uninterrupted Mahāyāna path of seeing to be a highly superior type of analytical meditation *(dpyad sgom),* as well as the first instance, in their path sequence, of nonconceptual wisdom *(nirvikalpajñāna, rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes).* In short, the relationship betweeen concentration and insight, which in earlier stages are antithetical, becomes, to borrow Gregory Bateson's term, complementary—meaning that the increase of one fits with and engenders development in the other. This is expressed in a variety of ways. Not only, as we have seen, is calm abiding said to induce special insight, but nonconceptual analytical meditation in general is considered a form of a yogi's discriminative wisdom *(pratyavekṣaṇājñāna, so sor rtog pa'i ye shes),* and any instance of special insight is also an analytical meditation.[31]

The wisdom directly realizing emptiness is a form of yogic direct perception, and it is nonconceptual in two senses. It lacks conceptual thought *(kalpanā, rtog pa)* and is also free of mistakenly aspected thought *(avikalpa, rnam par mi rtog pa),* meaning that it is not prey to the mistaken appearances *('khrul snang yod mkhyan)* that accompany most sensory direct perception. All yogic direct perception is not necessarily nonconceptual in both these ways. The yogic direct perception of impermanence is, of course, without conceptual thought *(nirvikalpa, rtog med),* but is still associated with mistaken aspects of thought because the impermanence which it directly realizes appears to inherently exist, although it does not.[32]

Thus we have noted how Dge-lugs-pa sūtra texts construe the relationship between calming and analysis on the first bodhisattva ground. These are regarded as thoroughly complementary, given that a distinction is made between the kinds of analysis associated with ordinary direct perception and the kind associated with the direct perception of emptiness. In this way a case is made for a nonconceptual knowing—that is, for a state that is unmediated insofar as no image or distorting tendencies intervene between knower and known. The unconditioned emptiness is its only possible object. As we will see below, such specific claims about the nature of the nonconceptual state become relevant to descriptions of how this nonconceptual experience is construed in relation to its subject.

### *The Nonconceptual Subject: Knowing without Knowing "Difference"*

One of Tsong-kha-pa's teachers, the Sagya scholar Red-mda'-ba (1349–1412), is unique among the *Entrance* commentators consulted here in taking up the issue of nonconceptual thought early in his discussion of the sixth bodhisattva ground. The use he makes of this issue con-

trasts with subsequent Dge-lugs-pa perspectives. He observes that the nature *(svabhāva, rang bzhin)* of the perfection of wisdom is a nonconceptual final wisdom *(nirvikalpajñāna, rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes),* and that it is nonconceptual in the sense that "when a yogi's mind is free of all signs of elaboration, becoming the nature of thusness, then it is nonconceptual."[33]

The clear distinction between subject and object that Tsong-kha-pa and his followers were to make axiomatic is foreign to Red-mda'-ba, as it is to Mipham and to Rdzogs-chen. Red-mda'-ba quotes Śāntideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* to support his own perspective (IX.34):

> When knower and object known
> Do not dwell before the mind,
> At that time, because no other aspect occurs,
> Objectless, [the mind] is fully pacified.[34]

According to Buddhist hagiography, Śāntideva began his ascent skyward while reciting this verse.[35] Perhaps this accounts for the interesting discrepancy in the first line of this stanza. In other versions of Śāntideva's text, this line makes no reference to knower and known but speaks of things and non-things.[36] However, Red-mda'-ba's rendition supports his subsequent explanation that a (wisdom) consciousness, indistinguishable from its object, is "the nature" of that object. (There is then, of course, no place for eliminative or partial engagement, or what Bateson calls "the difference that makes a difference." This is his definition of an idea, and in Buddhist terms it could be understood to refer to the eliminative process by which thought accesses its image.)[37]

Is such a nonconceptual wisdom a consciousness or not? If it is, then it would know its object and thus could not be described as pacified of the elaborations of subject and object. But if this nonconceptual wisdom is not a consciousness, how can it realize reality? For Red-mda'-ba, to say that it does so means this wisdom is not realizing anything that could be designated merely by the statement that "it realizes reality."[38] However, unlike other forms of nonconceptual consciousness such as sleep, fainting, and the like, this one is preceded by a yogi's discriminative wisdom that analyzes the nature of all things. At that time, not even a single atom of inherent existence is taken as an object and thus, after having done such analysis, the yogi's mind "becomes of the nature of reality."[39]

Postulating such fluidity between subject and object, and claiming that what is known is the subject itself, is certainly one way to suggest the possibility of an errorless, immediate, and nondualistic cognition. We have seen that Mipham and the Rnying-ma Rdzogs-chen tradition

in general also choose this. But it is not Tsong-kha-pa's way. His discussion of Prāsaṅgika, and the Dge-lugs-pas' after him, emphasizes that the powerful nondualistic experience of mind and emptiness as like "water poured into water" does not mean that mind and emptiness actually become utterly one. As with Kant, the categories of subject and object do not dissolve, even though the experience of them does disappear. This is as true on the first bodhisattva ground as it is on the sixth.

The nondual wisdom of the first ground is a form of special insight[40] simply by virtue of being wisdom. For Tsong-kha-pa, as for Red-mda'-ba, wisdom is not associated with "elaborations" *(prapañca, spros ba),*[41] because "elaborations" are ingredients of error. At the same time, Tsong-kha-pa and other Dge-lugs-pas do not take the functioning of wisdom to be merely an absence of error or corrective of ignorance. Emptiness is a mere and complete negative, but knowing emptiness is not. It is wisdom. Moreover, the mind is said to have positive abilities of its own even after ignorance and its predispositions have been eliminated. This view of wisdom's capacity is significant for the Dge-lugs-pa understanding of a how flawless, complete, and immediate understanding of the unconditioned can occur.

For Tsong-kha-pa, this claim is another way of saying that wholly correct knowledge is possible; if all knowledge were linked with ignorance, all ability to know—wisdom itself—would disappear when ignorance was extinguished.[42] Thus, on the path of seeing and afterward, one has analytical meditation without conceptualization, without "movement of thought." At this time one has a calm abiding concordant *(dang tshung ldan)* with one-pointedness on emptiness.[43] Such nonconceptual analytical meditation occurs for the first time on the Mahāyāna uninterrupted path of seeing.

Because no conceptual superimpositions *(āropa, sgro 'dogs)* are operative, analysis is said to function by way of direct perception. Such can only be accomplished in connection with emptiness, it is said, because only emptiness exists as it appears, and thus no analytical corrective is required. Having emptiness as an object means that the mind does not cast up images or presuppositions of any kind during the meditation session. To have post-sessional wisdom *(pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna, rjes thob ye shes)* means that the relationship of consciousness to any such images, as well as to the objects of direct perception, has shifted to such a degree that they no longer impinge on the mind in the same way, insofar as they are understood as illusory-like and so forth. In terms of whether subject or object now governs experience, the greater influence proceeds from the side of the subject, despite it being said that objects are at this time perceived with increasing accuracy and validity.

The first bodhisattva ground is the first time on the path when one is considered in unmediated contact with "reality" and knows it, without

distortion, "just as it is." Two items are of interest here. First, by calling such a direct, noncognitive perception a refined form of analysis, the way is prepared for theorizing a kind of transfer to direct perception of some of the capacity of conceptual power when the conceptual function itself is inoperative. Our discussion of the uncommon absorption of cessation that occurs at the sixth ground suggests a further permutation of this theme. "Nonconceptual analysis" is, of course, a quite different order of business than either conceptual analysis or other forms of direct perception. It is distinguished from these because it does not operate through either conceptual or sensory difference. That is, gradations in the object (like the loudness of music or the strength of a scent) play no part in such perception. Ordinarily, as Bateson observes, "the mind can receive news only of difference."[44] For Bateson (as well as for Kant, and most of the rest of us), therefore, "nonconceptual analysis" is a *sine qua non* contradiction in terms. But the Buddhist point here is that significant gradations or "differences" now occur primarily in the subject, not in its special object, emptiness. This brings us to a second point of interest.

Despite claims that on the path of seeing one knows reality "just as it is," such knowledge improves considerably over the remainder of the path. As the mind cognizing emptiness becomes more subtle—especially, more concentrated—the appearance of emptiness itself becomes "clearer."[45] Such further development no longer depends on changes in the object, but in capacities intrinsic to this type of consciousness and set in motion by it.[46]

In short, even though the initial direct cognition of emptiness is a complete and correct engager, there is room for improvement. Here, however, the usual sequence of perceptual events is reversed: It is changes in the subject that give rise to changes in experience of the object. The mind on the path of seeing does not respond to an external object; in this sense, at least, the mind is not conditioned by its object. Nor is it conditioned by the ordinary internal states, such as mood or quixotic interest, that generally govern experience. Such a mind is not referred to as unconditioned; it is called a stainless meditative equipoise *(myams bzahg zag med).*[47]

The Dge-lugs-pa distinction between a wisdom consciousness and its object, a logically pristine but counterintuitive point, supports their charting of a progressive clarification of both subject and object. The relative autonomy of the consciousness from its object at this time becomes qualified, however slightly, by the Dge-lugs-pa insistence that the categories of subject and object do not actually converge, even in valid, nondualistic experience. This emphasis stands in contrast to Red-mda'-ba and to vast bodies of Rnying-ma and other Tibetan literature. The Dge-lugs-pa scenario also raises questions about whether or not the

initial direct perception of emptiness, or only the ultimate one, can be considered immediate and undistorted perception. In any case, the dimensions along which "improvement" takes place (some of which are examined further below) by and large lie outside the issue of mediated versus unmediated cognition as it is examined in the West.

Thus claims regarding the possibilities of immediate cognition do not apply to knowledge in general, but have to do with the features particular to this nondual awareness, including its quality of calm, its special object, and its special relationship to that object. On the uninterrupted Mahāyāna path of seeing, the mind observing emptiness cannot have any new analysis,[48] but is said to have the function of analysis without the exertion (or fluctuation) of newly analyzing the object. Such lack of exertion is crucial to the claim that analysis can operate even when the mind observing emptiness has as its basis the meditative stabilization of the fourth concentration, in relation to which analysis is considered a fault.

Thus we have considered two issues associated with the "unmediated" cognition of emptiness on the first bodhisattva ground: the question of how analysis is associated with it, and the related matter of whether subject and object are construed as different. The category of mental calm pertains to both issues. A mind of calm abiding or greater concentration forms the ground of analytical insight and stills the constructs and elaborations of conceptual thought. In the process, it becomes a positive capacity associated with wisdom, providing the mental basis *(sems rten)* by which wisdom's special object can be cognized nondualistically, at the same time that calm abiding's very existence supports the distinction between subject and object.

## The Sixth Bodhisattva Ground

### *The Uncommon Absorption of Cessation*

In 1402, Tsong-kha-pa wrote the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path (Lam rim chen mo),* a classic of Tibetan Mādhyamika soteriology that, like his other *lam rim* texts, focuses on practices just antecedent to the accumulating path *(saṃbhāramārga, tshogs lam)* up to those by which the seeing path *(darśanamārga, mthong lam)* is attained. Sixteen years later, in his final work on Mādhyamika, *Illumination of the Thought,* Tsong-kha-pa turned detailed attention to the upper reaches of the path. Here he follows Candrakīrti's *Entrance to the Middle Way (Madhyamakāvatāra, Dbu ma la 'jug pa)* in describing the ten stages or grounds by which a bodhisattva progresses to buddhahood. In contrast to the *lam rim* genre, this text begins with the seeing path and describes the enhancement of the bodhisattva deeds: the perfection of giving on the first ground, and the perfec-

tions of ethics, patience, effort, concentration, wisdom, method, prayer, power, and initiation on the second through tenth grounds, respectively. Discussion of the sixth ground occupies over half the pages of this text.

Candrakīrti uses the term "cessation" to express an attainment unique to the sixth ground; Tsong-kha-pa glosses this as "an uncommon absorption of cessation," a term he uses only at the beginning of his three-hundred-page discussion of the sixth ground.[49] Monastic textbooks on the stages of the path *(sa lam),* tenets *(siddhānta, grub mtha'),* and the Collected Topics genre *(bsdus grva)* do not discuss this category. Virtually the only significant sources for the topic of an uncommon absorption of cessation come from monastic texts that comment on Candrakīrti's *Entrance* and draw on Tsong-kha-pa's discussion of this. Notable among this group are the *General Meaning of the Middle Way (Dbu ma'i spyi don)* and *Responding to Queries on the "Entrance" (Dbu ma la 'jug pa'i brgal lan)* by Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa (1478–1554), a major author of Drebung-Loseling textbooks;[50] the *Good Explanation of the General Meaning, Clarifying the Difficult Points of [Tsong-kha-pa's] "Illumination of the Thought" (Bstan bcos dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad dgongs pa rab gsal gyi dka' gnad gsal bar byed pa'i spyi don legs bshad skal bzang mgul rgyan)* by Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1469–1546); and the *Great Exposition of the Middle Way (Dbu ma chen mo)* by 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa (1648–1721).

The uncommon absorption of cessation, gained in dependence on the wisdom of the sixth ground, is also central to descriptions of the seventh and eighth grounds, whose special perfections—subcategories of the perfection of wisdom—are special method *(upāya, thabs)* and prayers *(praṇidhāna, smon lam),* respectively. Tsong-kha-pa's discussion builds directly from Candrakīrti, incorporating not only the *Entrance* verses but significant portions of Candrakīrti's own commentary on the *Entrance* as well.

The uncommon absorption of cessation is thus a category to which only a limited, albeit important, group of texts calls attention in Dge-lugs-pa, as well as a rubric that apparently gained increased attention after Tsong-kha-pa's day. The term appears to exist at least in part as a way of exploring how wisdom simultaneously (1) is completely united with its object, (2) is a knower of that object, and (3) improves or develops in the absence of any thought-imagery. Tsong-kha-pa may well have been the first to use the term; his own teacher Red-mda'-ba does not mention it in his commentary on Candrakīrti's *Entrance.*[51] It is also a category critical to understanding central aspects of the "improvement" that occurs without the benefit of "difference," as mentioned above, and that is said to characterize the subject knowing emptiness.

Tsong-kha-pa explains that on the fifth ground the bodhisattva's concentration, no longer impeded by distraction and other faults incompatible with the perfection of concentration, becomes surpassing. This surpassing concentration, in turn, enhances wisdom. Tsong-kha-pa, echoing Śāntideva's remarks on calm abiding quoted above, opens his discussion of the sixth ground with an observation on the relationship between calming and wisdom:

> As much as calm abiding is enhanced, so much is special insight enhanced. On the fifth ground the bodhisattva attained full development of the perfection of concentration so that, in dependence on this, here [on the sixth ground] the perfection of wisdom is fully developed.[52]

The power of what we might call a language-associated faculty—namely, insight—is increased through the development of a faculty not associated with language at all—namely, mental calming and concentration. To put this another way, calming, though it forms part of a cognitive process, is not itself altered by "ideas" or "difference." The mind of mental calm (technically, "calm abiding") does have an object, but its relationship to that object is distinguishable from that of most other cognitive processes. Here, the object is important as a support *(āśraya, rten)* rather than as an object of observation *(ālambana, dmigs pa)*. Thus the object is not considered a cause of subjective experience during the upper stages of concentration; rather, the subjective process unfolds through a power of its own. The same is true of the wisdom consciousness, which can exist only when conjoined with such a calmed mind.

Indeed, although the wisdom of insight is famous for being "inexpressible," its function is far more language-associated than the faculty of concentration that forms its basis. It is the wisdom of insight, after all, that is characterized as analytical, albeit nonconceptually so. The sixth ground, a supreme form of nonconceptual analysis according to Dge-lugs-pa, is attainable only after the perfection of concentration on the fifth ground has been activated. This wisdom is a substantial cause *(upadāna, nyer len)* of the uncommon absorption of cessation.[53] The precise nature of this causality is not explained as fully as one might hope, but both Candrakīrti and Tsong-kha-pa clearly suggest such a sequence. Their doing so supports the idea that such a consciousness is not impinged upon in the usual way by its object, but that this subjective experience is construed to proceed almost entirely from the side of the subject. In the *Entrance* itself, Candrakīrti writes (VI.1d), "By dwelling in wisdom [the bodhisattva] attains[54] cessation." His own commentary elaborates:

> Because on the fifth ground the Bodhisattva attained the completely pure perfection of concentration, on the sixth ground the bodhisattva dwells in

> a mind of meditative equipoise and sees the nature of the profound dependent-arising; due to the thoroughly pure perfection of wisdom, the bodhisattva achieves a cessation that did not occur previously.[55]

Tsong-kha-pa develops this briefly:

> Because [the bodhisattva] attained the thoroughly pure perfection of concentration on the fifth ground, on the sixth ground, the Approaching or Manifest, s/he dwells in a fully developed mind of meditative equipoise. With this as a basis s/he abides on the sixth bodhisattva ground seeing the profound suchness which is mere conditionality, or dependent-arising. Due to this, s/he abides in the fully developed perfection of wisdom, whereby s/he attains cessation. Prior to this, on the fifth ground and below, s/he did not attain cessation because of lacking the surpassing form of the fully developed perfection of wisdom. One cannot attain cessation merely through the five fully developed perfections of giving and so forth.[56]

Immediately following this statement, Tsong-kha-pa identifies the cessation in question as "an uncommon absorption of cessation."[57] Commenting on this passage two centuries later, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa points to Candrakīrti's own emphasis on the sequential relationship between the sixth-ground attainment of wisdom and this form of cessation:

> The bodhisattva, seeing the suchness of profound dependent-arising, attains [the uncommon absorption of] cessation through the thoroughly pure perfection of wisdom, not before, because he did not have the surpassing form of the perfection of wisdom.[58]

One gets the impression of two mounting spirals of mental functioning, each suporting and furthering the other. This internally stimulated energy continues to operate when thought disappears, revealing and expressing something about the nature of consciousness in the process, just as a bird that flies at the sight of a cat reveals and expresses something about the nature of bird.

What distinguishes a common from an uncommon absorption of cessation? The scholastic literature provides definitions of both. Pan-chen defines a common absorption of cessation as

> a nonassociated compositional factor included in the nine serial meditative absorptions, a category distinguished as free from desire for the peak of cyclic existence; it is attained in dependence on (1) the supermundane path that attains it, and (2) a mind of the peak of cyclic existence.[59]

Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan defines a common absorption of cessation similarly, as

> the wisdom directly realizing emptiness that is distinguished as free of desire for the peak of cyclic existence, which is attained in dependence on

> (1) a supermundane path, which is the method for attaining it, and (2) the meditative absorption, which is the actual basis for the peak of cyclic existence.[60]

Pan-chen also offers a briefer definition of a common absorption: "a meditative absorption of cessation that is included in the nine serial concentrations and absorptions."[61] Thus, according to Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, the wisdom of meditative equipoise of the first five grounds is neither a common nor an uncommon absorption of cessation.[62] It is not a common one because, being a consciousness, it is hardly a category outside the categories of form and consciousness *(viprayukta-saṃskāra, ldan min 'du byed).* Here Pan-chen, unlike 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, seems to concede that certain cessations are not consciousnesses. Yet even he would agree that this is not the Prāsaṅgika view.

In Prāsaṅgika, there can be no question of any absorption of cessation being a nonassociated compositional factor. The issue has to do with the referent of "cessation" in the phrase "absorption of cessation." According to Prāsaṅgika, the lower systems use this term to refer to the cessation of "coarse feeling and discrimination"; for Prāsaṅgika, a consciousness so qualified is one for which "all elaborations" have ceased.[63] The term can also refer to the object of the uncommon meditative absorption of cessation—namely, "thusness" or emptiness. But 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa points out that Prāsaṅgikas do not take the absorption of cessation to be a mere negative of feeling and discrimination. He implies that those non-Prāsaṅgika systems which consider an absorption of cessation itself to be a category outside of form or consciousness are at fault in thinking that, because coarse feeling and discrimination is absent, the mind is not operating at all.[64] Similarly, Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan observes that although sūtras common to both vehicles speak of a meditative absorption in which coarse consciousnesses have ceased, Prāsaṅgika would not assert such a mind as an absorption of cessation any more than it would accept as correct the non-Prāsaṅgika descriptions of the view that the transitory is a real self *(satkāya-dṛṣṭi, 'jig tshogs la lta ba).*[65]

The point for Prāsaṅgika, of course, is that consciousness does not cease in absorption; only coarse forms of consciousness do. It is this assertion that allows us to consider cessation a mental process. Accordingly, Blo-bzang-rta-dbyangs observes that after attainment of the eighth meditative absorption, when the object is the cessation known as thusness, "coarse feelings and discrimination, the appearance of subject and object, and the movement of mind and mental factors are ceased."[66] Similarly, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa writes that neither feelings, discriminations, nor the other aggregates are extinguished in such

a meditative equipoise, except insofar as they fail to appear to the mind of a practitioner engaged in direct cognition of emptiness.[67] It is from this point of view that we can speak of an absorption of cessation.

In other words, Pan-chen's remarks notwithstanding, later Dge-lugs-pa Prāsaṅgika maintains that such an absorption must be a consciousness. By implication, it is only those who do not understand the extent of calm or the full potential of the internally engendered energy associated with consciousness who are susceptible to misinterpeting the cessation of coarse minds as cessation of consciousness.

The increasing subtlety of consciousness is a crucial ingredient in the developmental path proposed by Dge-lugs-pa Prāsaṅgika; it is essential to achieving the kind of unmediated cognition that characterizes much of a practitioner's experience over the ten grounds and finds its most complete expression in the consciousness of a buddha. These differences are expressed in epistemological, not ontological terms, insofar as all minds are technically "conditioned phenomena." However, the wisdom consciousness is not "conditioned" in the more ordinary sense of the term, which signifies the impact on the mind of afflictions, conceptual processes, or adventitious causes and conditions.[68]

As a type of meditative equipoise, this uncommon absorption is a form of the calming-and-focusing function; it is also, by definition, a wisdom consciousness. For example, Pan-chen defines an uncommon absorption of cessation as "a wisdom of meditative equipoise that is directly poised equally on reality, [and] induced by the surpassing practice of the perfection of wisdom."[69] This occurs, Pan-chen adds, from the sixth ground through to buddhahood. His definition of the meditative equipoise specifically indicated on the sixth ground is: "The wisdom of meditative equipoise on the sixth ground that is induced by the surpassing practice of the perfection of wisdom."[70] Pan-chen also offers a slightly broader definition of the absorption of cessation discussed here: "A wisdom of meditative equipoise of the sixth ground that is induced by that [surpassing] practice [of the perfection of wisdom] which does not come earlier, on lower paths."[71]

In any case, as Pan-chen further observes, the first five grounds are not uncommon meditative absorptions because they are not induced by a surpassing practice of the perfection of wisdom. It is not until the sixth ground that one has what Tsong-kha-pa calls a "surpassing, fully developed perfection of wisdom" *(shes phyin phul du byung ba'i lhag pa).*[72] Thus every instance of a bodhisattva's meditative equipoise on emptiness is not an uncommon absorption of cessation.[73]

Like all wisdom consciousnesses of the first and subsequent grounds, the wisdom of emptiness possessed by a sixth-ground bodhisattva is also a mind of collective engagement. By dwelling in this understanding, the bodhisattva can attain a cessation not possible previously. Why not?

Because, say Candrakīrti and Tsong-kha-pa, until that time one did not have the surpassing or fully developed perfection of wisdom, and one cannot gain such a cessation merely through the five perfections of giving and so forth.[74] In other words, without an increased level of concentration which frees the mind from dependence on difference supplied by the object—that is, from differentiating a single object over time, or even from differentiating it from other objects with the same force as before—there is an increase in the insight that undermines the impact of the object, so that the subject becomes increasingly free from a differentiation between itself and the emptiness that is its special object.

Even though the direct wisdom of emptiness begins on the first ground, we have seen that the "surpassing, fully developed perfection of wisdom" begins only at the sixth ground. One of the features of this wisdom is its special understanding of emptiness itself as dependently constituted, a dependent-arising. At this time, one "sees emptiness to be like a reflection in the sense that it exists but is not truly established."[75] It is a dependent-arising in the sense that, for example, the emptiness of a table depends on the emptinesses of the parts of the table, but at the same time it is "unconditioned" because it does not change from moment to moment in dependence on causal conditions, and thus does not exhibit the most telling symptoms of ordinary conditionality: production, aging, and destruction. Therefore, although beyond dependence on at least the more obvious forms of conditioning, including culturally conditioned functions such as language, emptiness is not independent in general; nor is the "inexpressible" mind that cognizes it. Inexpressibility has to do with a new relationship between subject and object, such as the subject's experienced fusion with its object, and between certain of the subject's cognizing functions, such as the full complementarity between concentration and insight. It also has to do with the ascendance of concentration, a mental state that is even less moored in language than the "inexpressible" wisdom it makes possible.

The uncommon absorption of cessation on the sixth ground and above has as its mental basis the highest level of concentration included within cyclic existence. Thus the calming side of the insight/calming equation is considerably more developed than at the initial union of calm abiding and special insight. More significantly, as already mentioned, the uncommon absorption of cessation is a wisdom consciousness. Its being a consciousness is the most obvious way in which the uncommon absorption of cessation is distinguished from the cessation of discrimination and feeling *(saṃjñāveditanirodha, 'du shes dang tshor ba 'gog pa)* described by Buddhaghosa in the *Path of Purification,* wherein nothing mental endures, and by Vasubandhu in the *Treasury of Knowledge,* where a cessation is described as neither mind nor form.[76]

This latter type of cessation could be considered unconditioned,

according to Asaṅga's *Compendium of Knowledge (Abhidharmasamuccaya, Mngon pa kun btus).*[77] But as Pan-chen dryly observes, there are other types of absorptions of cessation than those mentioned in the *Treasury,*[78] and the uncommon absorption of cessation is said to culminate the four concentrations and formless absorptions.[79] In any case, the historical roots of this debate should not obscure the fact that the crucial epistemological issue here is the extent to which consciousness can become distanced from usual modes of sensory, conceptual, and other culturally or conceptually specific input, and still function as consciousness in some meaningful way.[80] As a category, this uncommon absorption of cessation furthers the interconnection of the functions of calm abiding and special insight, which first combined on the preparation path. To call the union of these "special insight" is to assimilate, at least linguistically, the function of calming to insight; by contrast, on the sixth ground, the name "meditative equipoise" assimilates, or even masks, the function of wisdom. In both cases, differential categories are maintained, despite their differences becoming less important than their mutuality.

*Absorption of Cessation on the Seventh and Eighth Grounds*

The category of cessation is also given a significant role in explaining the increased power of the unmediated cognition of emptiness over the sixth through eighth grounds. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, partly paraphrasing Nāgārjuna's *Precious Garland (Ratnāvalī, Rin che'i phreng ba),* describes several of the remaining steps to buddhahood in terms of the uncommon absorption of cessation:

> On the sixth ground one attains the absorption of cessation; on the seventh one attains power over the absorption of cessation; on the eighth one enters absorption in the sense of manifesting it, and the Conquerors raise one from cessation.[81]

Thus continues the tale of consciousness' functioning at an increased distance from the mediated and particularized, as its collateral or internally engendered activity continues to unfold.

Having initially gained the uncommon absorption of cessation on the sixth ground, on the seventh ground the bodhisattva becomes able to enter into and rise from it quickly, and on the eighth ground gains the surpassing perfection of prayer—specifically, a prayer that one not lose these good qualities. Powerful prayer is also deemed necessary because on the seventh ground one developed such an affinity for the absorption of cessation that no less than a buddha must rouse one from it—perhaps the only time on the sūtra bodhisattva path that Dge-lugs-pa finds outside intervention to be required. Thus the process or system is depicted as for a brief period in (hypothetical) danger of collapsing in on itself, due to the calming function overwhelming the insight function.

To restore and develop their complementarity, an "external" intervention (which, however, is a direct response to subjective processes) is framed. The danger is itself the result of a crucial change in the relationship between "subject" and "object." Candrakīrti writes:

> On [the seventh ground, called] Gone Afar, moment by moment [the bodhisattva] enters into cessation and attains the excellent, sparkling *(legs 'bar ba)* perfection of method. Because this absorption into cessation is an absorption into the excellent culmination *(bhūtakoti, yang dag pa'i mtha'),* it is known as a cessation into thusness *(tathatā, de bzhin nyid)* because all elaborations here are ceased.[82]

Commenting on this point, Tsong-kha-pa quotes from the *Sūtra on the Ten Grounds* the statement that from the seventh ground onward, the bodhisattva enters and arises from absorptions in cessation in a single moment of mind.[83]

The description of this cessation as a lack of elaborations and a cessation into "thusness" seems to indicate that the cessation which the seventh-ground bodhisattva enters into and rises from with such alacrity is the uncommon absorption of cessation mentioned in the sixth ground.[84] Yet Pan-chen observes that the cessation attained through abiding in the wisdom of the sixth ground and the cessation which is entered into in a single moment and departed from in the next are not the same, because the former is a subjective cessation *(yul can 'gog pa'i snyoms 'jug)* and the latter an objective one, correlative with thusness *(yul 'gog pa de bzhin nyid).*[85] This accords with Tsong-kha-pa's observation that the seventh-ground bodhisattva's meditative equipoise is characterized by a cessation of all elaborations of dualistic appearance into thusness; hence the shifting referent of "cessation" from subject to object mentioned above. Perhaps it is inevitable that, with the line of demarcation between subject and object grown increasingly evanescent, a single term comes to point to both.

Why the increased agility on the seventh ground? What prevents the mind from quickly entering into and arising from this particular state of absorption as quickly when it is first attained? Two crucial elements are lacking. First, on the sixth ground the mind is slower, relatively speaking, because the practitioner still needs to enter direct cognition of emptiness by way of a mental image of such. This idea born of difference is still the revolving door by which one accomplishes the desired *mise-en-scène.* Put more traditionally, mental images are objects of conceptual thought; thus they are incompatible with direct perception, and reliance on them slows one down.[86] Second—and almost certainly related to the increased ability to bypass the conceptual apparatus—one acquires the "skillful means" that are the special perfection of the seventh ground and a subcategory of the surpassing perfection of wisdom. Mere meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness is insufficient to provide

such agile entering and arising as occur on the seventh ground; the skillful means attained here consists of "a wisdom of meditative equipoise induced by the surpassing method and wisdom which are of the entity of the uncommon absorption of cessation."[87] The particular skills of the seventh ground include an unprecedented ability to unite method and wisdom in a variety of ways.[88] One can, for example, combine a non-dualistic realization that objects are like illusions with an intention to accomplish an immeasurable variety of activities and objectives.

'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa lists three types of power that give rise to the agility of the seventh ground: (1) the power of possessing ten unions of special method and wisdom; (2) the power of cultivating a hundred thousand meditative stabilizations, and so forth; and (3) the power of a compassion induced by these.[89] Directly or indirectly, all three of these capacities appear to derive from the mind's growing independence from thought processes, and especially from those aspects of it which oppose the union or full complementarity of the conventional *(saṃvṛti, kun rdzob)* components of method and the ultimate *(paramārtha, don dam pa)* components of wisdom.

Both concentration and wisdom are described as contributing to the mind's ability to function in the absence of thought. The conception of true existence, in all its permutations, is represented as the first barrier to such unified cognition. On the seventh ground, the level at which one overcomes all conceptions of true existence, there is an increased facility with compassion and the wisdom of emptiness. One is able to enter and rise from meditative stabilization on either with equal agility. This suggests that the calming of the subject, combined with the seventh ground's final dismantling of conceptions incongruent with the view of emptiness, is at least as significant as having emptiness as the object of mental stabilization. Put another way, the religious significance of emptiness has as much to do with the special characteristics of the mind that observes it as with emptiness' own unique status as an unconditioned phenomenon.

## Concluding Remarks

It is clear that the Dge-lugs-pa mārga literature goes to great lengths to explain how the two mental gestures of insight and calming intersect experientially. My contention is that the category of mental quiescence is crucial to their understanding of how the mind, itself a conditioned phenomenon, becomes divested of certain culturally and psychologically determined forms of conditioning. More specifically, the mind arguably becomes free, or at least freer, of the language that conditions conceptual formations, and free or freer from the impact of material culture through cessation of the sense consciousnesses by which mate-

rial culture is apprehended. That is, both thought and ordinary sensory experience are quiescent in deep concentration. This is how the conditioned mind of insight comes to know the unconditioned emptiness.

The centrality of the categories associated with the calming function is partly a consequence of the Dge-lugs-pa insistence that emptiness is an object of the wisdom consciousness. This premise makes it necessary to explain how a conditioned consciousness can become experientially integrated with an an unconditioned object. Thus Dge-lugs-pa incorporates discussion of calming in its descriptions of this experience as (1) nondualistic, (2) nonconceptual, (3) and analytical. Calming the mind aids withdrawal from dualistic sensory perception; it also frees the mind from the usual impingement by conceptual thought. When such a nondualistic, nonconceptual state becomes the basis for insight, it bequeaths a steadiness of mind whereby analytical understanding can remain even after the conceptual processes of analysis have been left behind.

The significance of concentration as a category of path structure can also be inferred through observing that concentration becomes an issue at points of incremental change in the nonconceptual wisdom—namely, at the first and sixth bodhisattva grounds. The stilling of conceptual movement and of images allows the mind fully to take on the aspect of the unconditioned emptiness, even though, as categories, subject and object remain distinct. By exploring in some detail the role that specific forms of mental quiescence have at the first and sixth bodhisattva grounds, we can conclude that calm abiding and the uncommon absorption of cessation are crucial in explaining how "insight" is assimilated to a nonconceptual mind, and how such a consciousness, though technically "conditioned," is not subject to conditioning in the usual way. "Conditioned" and "unconditioned" are famous as mutually exclusive categories, and often spoken of as if there were no gray area between them; nevertheless, a close examination of the role of mental quiescence indicates that there are indeed "degrees" of conditioning. All mental states are not conditioned in the same way or to the same degree, and thus there is an ameliorating connection between these two oppositionally framed categories. It seems to me that this is a meaningful way to understand how, from the Dge-lugs-pa perspective, a bodhisattva's wisdom of the unconditioned "improves" over the path, even though no further analysis, correction, or conceptual development takes place.

It is also significant that, although posed in oppositional-sounding terms, "conditioned" and "unconditioned" do not, for the Dge-lugs-pas, describe a difference in existential status or ontology. Both the conditioned and unconditioned are dependent-arisings and conventionally

existent, characteristics which allow them to participate with each other as objects in general and as objects of meditative processes in particular. In Dge-lugs-pa texts, this participation is often discussed in ontological terms as the union of the two truths—that is, of the unconditioned emptiness and the conditioned objects which it qualifies. In epistemological terms, the case is made that a properly conditioned mind can experience the unconditioned, and that it can do so with such force and immediacy that the effect of ordinary conditioning is negligible.[90]

Rnying-ma's discussion of Rdzogs-chen would fault Dge-lugs-pa for failing to recognize that the unconditioned can in fact characterize the subject itself. Mipham speaks of a primordial wisdom that knows the natural state of things and pervades everywhere. Not being separate from anything, it does not take an object in the Dge-lugs-pas' sense of the term. This primordial wisdom is not impermanent or changeable like ordinary consciousnesses. It is beyond being either conditioned or unconditioned, and therefore Mipham calls it the "Great Unconditioned."[91] Although he agrees with Dge-lugs-pa that consciousness in general is impermanent and conditioned, Mipham holds that "the primordial wisdom in which consciousness and object of consciousness are of one taste . . . is not like this";[92] rather, it "has the nature of the unconditioned and changeless."[93] Mental quiescence is just one of the many splendid qualities spontaneously associated with this primordial wisdom; unlike in the Dge-lugs-pa path described here, there is in Rdzogs-chen no need to speak of or cultivate it separately. Even such a very brief reference to a Rnying-ma perspective indicates how, within the Tibetan Buddhist context, there are dramatic differences regarding how the categories of conditioned and unconditioned are mapped onto a path of religious engagement.

Important as mental calming is for Dge-lugs-pas in resolving what they see as problematic in mārga theory, it is also an important category in relation to how contemporary Western thinkers might approach this presentation. We have noted that both Dge-lugs-pa and Rnying-ma presume that their practices facilitate an experience free from the imprint of ordinary conditioning, whether cultural or psychological. In the Dge-lugs-pa context especially, it seems fair to say that mental calm frees the mind of some layers of conditioning. Neither the usual internal dialogue nor sensory objects—both bearers of particular cultural circumstance—have the usual effect on the mind. Moreover, during cognition of emptiness, their influence does not intervene between the cognizing subject and its object, and the resultant meditative experience does not carry forward the full imprint of its conditioning causes. For these reasons, a bodhisattva's cognition of emptiness, made possible by mental quiescence, can be considered immediate.

If calming frees the mind from moving among different objects, spe-

cial insight frees it from all experience of differentation. The mind, now capable of staying with only one object, focuses on an object without qualities, a mere negation. Particularity has no part in this direct cognition. Moreover, the impetus for both insight and calming derives from the side of the subject; unlike other "objects," emptiness is not a cause of the mind's perception of it. In this sense the mind is not conditioned by its unconditioned object. Moreover, the subjective conditions of mental clarity, intensity, stillness, and so forth, which make this perception possible, are regarded as attributes of consciousness that, once achieved, are the same for everyone. This leads to an implicit—and, for many of us, problematic—claim that conditioning by the path leads to a universal, transcultural experience.[94] At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, the final effect of experiencing the unconditioned is not to make one more distant from environmental exigencies, but rather more responsive to them. The particularities that formerly limited one's perspective, or were so reified as to obscure the changing nature of a situation, are now experienced as insubstantial and transient. Constant attention is required.

The experience of emptiness is also presumed to be universal on the grounds that emptiness itself has no particular characteristics but is simply an absence of reified particularity. The mind has a capacity to "take on the aspect of," or mirror, this absence of specific images and thoughts. Whether we look at Rnying-ma descriptions of being "freed into the empty nature of your own mind" or Dge-lugs-pa descriptions of mind and emptiness as like "fresh water poured into fresh water," we find the distinct implication that here is an experience located in but not affected by personal, cultural, or social history.

This may seem like an extreme example of the point, noted in the introduction to this volume, that mārga literature sometimes favors the abstract at the expense of the person. The texts I have discussed here certainly do that. However, it must be remembered that the kind of training these texts describe was carried out in an intensely "personal" setting—typically while living closely with others in a monastery or small village. Even the solitary meditator in his mountain cave is understood to be part of this social context. Moreover, the texts themselves were important not only for their elucidations of the path, but because they provided a forum for intense, extended teacher-student relationships and for much peer interaction in the debating courtyard. In short, the mārga texts are evidence of the intellectual but not the social context for the practices they describe.

The unconditioned or transcultural nature of emptiness is a powerful assumption in the Buddhist context, and especially in its understanding of meditative experience. That such experience is discerned and expressed only through culturally specific language, art, and so forth does

not undermine its power as a category of Buddhist thought. Unpalatable as it may be to contemporary sensibilities, the possibility of experiencing the unconditioned remains a crucial and irreducible element of Buddhist soteriology.

Claims of universal relevance characterize most traditional religions and are central to the complex tensions between traditional and modern (or post-modern) perspectives. As products of the contemporary Western world, we cannot understand our relationship to this literature without acknowledging that tension. Oddly enough, it is a tension that roughly parallels the antipathy Tsong-kha-pa observes between conditioned, conceptual analyses of emptiness and the nonconceptual experience of the unconditioned that is its result. In both cases the question is how a perspective grounded in conditionality responds to claims that possibilities exist outside that realm. However, whereas Tsong-kha-pa holds that a conditioned mind can have an unmitigated experience of the unconditioned, and thus is satisfied to resolve the tension epistemologically, contemporary theorists are not.

Virtually no contemporary Western thinker would take seriously, much less agree with, the notion that conditioned persons can have an experience outside of historical, cultural, psycho-social, and other sets of conditionings. Neither Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, nor those following Kant, for example, would postulate or even seek a resolution between their own positions and the Buddhist claim that there are states of mind unaffected either by personal or cultural histories or by epistemic limitations. Here, the conditioning role of social and personal histories is emphasized in ways that are foreign to Buddhism. From the viewpoint of contemporary theories, Buddhist soteriological categories are but one more example of cultural construction, with Tsong-kha-pa's "nondualistic experience of the unconditioned emptiness" or Mipham's "Great Unconditioned" included among culturally mediated constructs.

From the Buddhist perspective, such a viewpoint is limited and reductionistic in its fascination with conditionality. The Buddhist position also emphasizes conditionality but does not subsume all other perspectives to it. For Buddhists, the unconditioned is epistemologically meta to the conditioned—not the other way around.[95] For them, the emphasis that Foucault and Lacan put on cultural and linguistic constructions of experience is like theorizing the existence of dependent-arising without positing the emptiness that is its inseparable counterpart.[96]

Moreover, "unconditioned" does not, in Dge-lugs-pa sūtra systems, refer to a mind, a subject, but to an object that the mind can know. To the extent that imagistic and other interferences are set aside, one has an experience of the unconditioned. Although the unconditioned itself

has no causes, the experience of it clearly does: it comes about through intentional behavior encouraged in certain cultural milieux, but from the Dge-lugs-pa perspective, as we have seen, this does not in and of itself make it a cultural construct.

The current scholarly emphasis on understanding all experience and beliefs, especially religious ones, as a product of human culture is in part a response to various kinds of traditionalist positions in the West, especially the Judeo-Christian emphasis on symbols and mores once claimed as universal but now unmasked as culture-bound. In some quarters, claims of universal truth inevitably became associated with imperialistic tendencies. Partly because of this history, it has become meaningful in the contemporary West to think of human behavior as necessarily mediated through culture. Buddhist vocabulary, however, reforms the issue as an examination of how concepts, language, and the process of differentiation itself filter and impinge on direct experience—and the extent to which this filter is removable. Again, the calming function is important in this process, even if we outside the tradition cannot assume that, because thought no longer impinges in the same way, cultural constraints and associated psychological ones are utterly in abeyance.

It is important to note, therefore, that the Buddhist claims discussed here are most appropriately understood as claims about mental process rather than about the nature of truth, even if such claims significantly inform one another. In their traditional context, premises about the universality of these experiences are less signifcant than Buddhist conviction in the salvific efficacy of these states. The issue of universality gains new significance as these ideas come into contact with contemporary Eurocentric sensibilities.[97]

The unification of method and wisdom that the uncommon absorption of cessation makes possible on the sixth bodisattva ground seems to offer a model of the conditioned and unconditioned as intertwined elements of an intersubjective dialogue. Together they form not a dichotomy but an intricate pattern of mental engagement. The Dge-lugs-pa emphasis on the role of calming at the first and sixth bodhisattva grounds suggests that the development of mental quiescence is crucial in reducing culturally specific impressions, making possible an experience that is immediate in being nonconceptual and nondualistic. Rnying-ma criticizes this model, suggesting that qualities such as mental quiescence are intrinsic to the "Great Unconditioned" mind rather than a means to it. For all their diversity, these two sets of Buddhist assumptions agree on the transcultural nature of the experiences they describe. Read closely, I hope they will stimulate reflection on the claims associated with the categories of the conditioned and unconditioned in a cross-cultural context.

## Notes

Thanks to Harvey Aronson, Robert Buswell, George Dreyfuss, Bernard Faure, Van Harvey, Rob Gimello, Jeffrey Hopkins, and Lee Yearley for helpful comments at the Conference or at various stages of writing this article.

1. Quoted by Ngag-dbang-bstan-'dzin-rdo-rje in *Klong chen snying gi thig le'i mkha' 'gro bde chen rgyal mo'i sgrub gzhung gi 'grel pa rgyud don snang ba* (New Delhi: Sonam Kazi, Ngagyur Nyingmay Sungrab, 1972), vol. 28, 15.3. According to Ven. Tulku Thondup, this is probably from the *Rdor je gsang ba'i snying po rtsa ba'i rgyud de kho na nyid nges pa* from the *Rnyingma'i rgyud 'bum,* vol. 16, pp. 1–137.

2. For example, Mipham opens his commentary on Candrakīrti's *Entrance to the Middle Way* (*Madhyamakāvatāra, Dbu ma la 'jug pa;* see note 13 below) with an obeisance to "naturalness *(tathathā, de bzhin nyid)* free from the clouds of elaboration in the birthless sky of the dharma sphere *(chos dbyings).*" Mipham, *Commentary on* [*Candrakīrti's*] *"Entrance,"* in *Collected Writings of 'Jam-mgon 'Ju Mi-pham-rgya-mtsho* (Gangtok: Sonam Topgay Kazi, 1979), 1:340.1.

3. Mipham, *The Lion's Roar of the Great Synopsis of Topics on the Tathāgatha Essence (Bde gshegs snying bo'i stong thun chen mo seng ge'i nga ro),* (Delhi: Ngagyur Nyingma Sungrab, 1976), vol. 62, 575.1, "Consciousness does not occur in common locus with the permanent." See also ibid., 574.3–4 for a list of errors which are entailed if the tatāgatha essence, or buddha-nature, is construed as impermanent.

4. Khetsun Sangbo, July 1986, San Jose Ca., in comment on Mipham, *Lion's Roar,* 571.1–4.

5. Mipham, *Lion's Roar,* 568.1–2, and Khetsun Sangpo, oral comment, July 1986. Indeed, Mipham's own commentary on Candrakīrti's *Entrance* opens its sixth-chapter discussion of wisdom by noting that "the explanation of the sixth ground, the Manifest, has three parts, a brief indication of the subject which is the entity of the ground, an extensive explanation of the emptiness which is the object, and a conclusion which expresses the good qualities of the ground" (Mipham, *Commentary on* [*Candrakīrti's*] *"Entrance,"* 1:367.5). These first two "parts" do not occur in commentaries on the *Entrance* by Tsong-kha-pa and other Dge-lugs-pa writers. Mipham's mention of emptiness as an object indicates that in this text he entertains the categories of classic Indian Mādhyamika, whereas *Lion's Roar* expresses a Rdzogs-chen perspective.

6. Mipham, *Lion's Roar,* 568.2.

7. Ibid., 566.2.

8. Ibid., 568.2.

9. Ibid., 564.4; see also ibid., 568.3.

10. Ibid., 569.4.

11. Ibid., 560.2, 571.4ff., 575.5.

12. Ibid., 571.4ff.

13. Candrakīrti, *Madhyamakāvatāra (Entrance to the Middle Way, Dbu ma la 'jug pa), P* 5261, vol. 98; *P* 5262, vol. 98, and Tsong-kha-pa, *Illumination of the Thought, An Extensive Explanation of* [*Candrakīrti's*] *"Entrance to the Middle Way" (Dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rgya cher bshad pa dgongs pa rab gsal), P* 6143, vol. 154.

14. Informal discussion with Ganden Shartse scholars, including Kangyur Rinboche Lobsang Topgyal, Geshe Lobsang Tenzin, Lobsang Yarphel, and Geshe Tshultrim Gyeltsen, January 9, 1989, Houston, Tex. Compare with note 47 below.

15. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer of this volume who made several helpful suggestions on this point.

16. See Anne C. Klein, *Knowledge and Liberation* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1986), 183–189, 193–197.

17. The principle of nonlinearity may be helpful here. It means, among other things, that the act of playing the game has a way of changing the rules; there is no linear reproduction of causal characteristics in their "effects." Such occurs because neither the "game" nor the "person" is a closed or limited system, just as s/he is not in the thinking of Lacan, Foucault, and others. That the self is a variable cluster of processes which are themselves parts of larger processes is certainly a dominant contemporary theme; cybernetics and chaos theory in the "hard" sciences, and, in the "human" sciences, the influential writings of Lacan and Foucault can all be considered important variations on this theme. Nevertheless, despite an arguably similar "systems" approach, it is immediately obvious that important claims associated with classical Buddhist path-structure seem inexorably at odds with important principles of contemporary understanding.

18. Quoted by Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa (1478–1554) in *General Meaning of [Maitreya's] "Ornament for Clear Realization" (Phar phyin spyi don/Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan 'grel pa dang bcas pa'i rnam bshad snying po rgyan gyi don legs par bshad pa yum don gsal ba'i sgron me),* (Buxaduor: Nang bstan shes rig 'dzin skyong slob gnyer khang, 1963), 155a.1; see also the translation in Lati Rinbochay, Lochö Rinbochay, Leah Zahler, and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1983), 167.

19. Lati Rinbochay et al., *Meditative States,* p. 176; Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, *General Meaning,* 156b.3–4. Pan-chen reports these texts' assertion that "the meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight is the attainment of a mind that abides non-conceptually on emptiness after special insight is induced through the power of having done analysis by reasoning from within calm abiding observing an object such as emptiness."

20. Tsong-kha-pa observes that "from the initial attainment of special insight one attains [this] union [of calm abiding with special insight]." Quoted in Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, *General Meaning,* 156.b; translated in Lati Rinbochay et al., *Meditative States,* p. 176.

21. Denma Lochö Rinbochay (Geshe of Drebung, Loseling), quoted in Lati Rinbochay et al., *Meditative States,* p. 177.

22. Denma Lochö Rinbochay, quoted in ibid., p. 178.

23. Dkon-mchogs-'jigs-med-dbang-po (a.k.a. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa II, 1728–1791), *Grounds and Paths: An Ornament Beautifying the Three-fold Presentation of the Grounds and Paths (Sa lam gyi rnam bzhag bsum smdzes rgyan),* (New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo [reproduced from blocks of Gomang Bkra-shis-'khyil], 1971), 446.3.

24. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa (1648–1721), *Srid zhi'i mtha' gnyis 'gog pa'i bden pa mngon rtogs,* in *The Seventy Topics: Sacred Word of the Indomitable Lama Explaining Well the Eight Categories and Seventy Topics [of Maitreya's "Ornament for Clear Realization" (Abhisamayālaṃkāra, Mngon rtogs rgyan)] (Dngos po brgyad don bdun [b]cu'i rnam bzhag legs par bshad pa mi pham bla ma'i zhal lung),* (New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo [from blocks of Gomang Bkra-shis-'khyil], vol. 15 ba of the Collected Works, 1972), 131.5–6. In the same text, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa also defines *mthong lam rtse sbyor,* which he explains (164.6) is a synonym for the path of seeing, as "a Mahāyāna manifest realization which is set forth in terms of being an

antidote to the conception of true [existence] that is abandoned by [the path of] seeing" (*mthong spang bden 'dzin gyi gnyen po byed pa'i cha nas bzhag pa'i theg chen gyi bden pa mngon rtogs,* 163.6).

25. This can profitably be related with Gregory Bateson's famous statement that "an idea is a difference which makes a difference" (*Steps to an Ecology of Mind* [New York: Ballantine Books, 1972], 318). Culture, too, is a process of differentiation. The Buddhist categories of complete and partial engagers and their relationship to direct and conceptual perception, respectively, are discussed in Klein, *Knowledge and Liberation,* and by Elizabeth Napper in *Mind in Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1980).

26. Loling Kensur Yeshay Tupden, oral commentary, spring 1980, Mundgod, India. This part of the etymology strictly applies only to the first bodhisattva ground because on the uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation—and hence of the second through tenth bodhisattva grounds—it is possible to have true cessation as an object, and thus the objects of equipoise on those grounds are not necessarily emptinesses. For example, the true cessation of afflictions that occurs on the first ground can be an object of the uninterrupted path of the second ground (Loling Kensur Yeshay Tupden, oral commentary, spring 1980).

This kind of parity, which does not have a parallel in ordinary direct perception, can be read as an attempt to theorize away "distance" between subject and object. It thus addresses one of Mipham's objections to "other viewpoints" such as Dge-lugs-pa—namely, that they understand the wisdom *dharmakāya* as coextensive mainly with objects, not subjects (Mipham, *Lion's Roar,* 567.4–568.3, and oral comment by Khetsun Sangpo, summer 1986, San Jose, Calif.)

27. The twenty-three also include: the five omnipresent factors of feeling, discrimination, intention, mental engagement, and contact; the five determining mental factors of aspiration, belief, mindfulness, stabilization, and wisdom; the eleven virtuous mental factors of faith, shame, embarrassment, nonattachment, nonhatred, nonignorance, effort, pliancy, conscientiousness, equanimity, and nonharmfulness; and the two changeable mental factors of investigation and anlaysis. Presumably, however, investigation and analysis would be absent if, for example, one were at the level of the fourth concentration.

Only those factors of mind that are one entity *(ngo bo gcig)* with the wisdom consciousness are said to cognize emptiness; however, there are qualities—such as the impermanence and emptiness of that consciousness—that, though one entity with it, do not cognize emptiness. Similarly, the compassionate intention of *bodhicitta* is not itself the wisdom realizing emptiness, but is a good quality of that wisdom, in the sense that both it and the perfection of wisdom embellish the same mental continuum (main points from Loling Kensur Yeshay Tupden, oral commentary, spring 1980). In this system, the mental factor of investigation is said to engage its object in a general manner, whereas analysis involves a more detailed investigation. See Lati Rinbochay et al., *Meditative States,* p. 116.

28. Geshe Gedun Lodrö (Geshe of Drebung, Gomang), "Calm Abiding and Special Insight," unpub. ms., p. 342.

29. Pan-chen Sö-nam-drak-pa, *General Meaning,* 162.a6; Lati Rinbochay et al., *Meditative States,* p. 197.

30. Tara Rinboche, oral commentary on 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's *Dbu ma chen mo,* April 1988, Charlottesville, Va. At the same time, both Tara Rinboche and (Geshe) George Dreyfuss observe that the texts are not very clear on what the precise difference is here; Tara Rinboche also noted that insofar as neither Prāsaṅgika nor Svātantrika discusses the relationship between the categories of

"special insight" and "analytical meditation," this, too, is difficult to assess. The remainder of this paragraph and the next one are from Loling Kensur Yeshay Tupden in oral commentary on Tsong-kha-pa's *Illumination of the Thought,* summer 1986, Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, Washington, N.J.

31. Thus a yogic direct cognition of impermanence does not depart from Lacanian, Kantian, or other contemporary epistemologies in the way that claims about direct perception of emptiness do. Other forms of direct perception, however religiously significant they may be, still do not know things just as they are. It remains to be investigated whether the sense in which they superimpose error on reality has much of significance in common with the kind of limits that Kant or Lacan observe in knowledge and language. In any case, for Prāsaṅgika, only the latter is claimed to be free of any area of mistake regarding appearances *(sang ba la 'khrul sa yod ma red).*

32. Thanks to George Dreyfuss on this point.

33. Red-mda'-ba Gzhon-nu-blo-gros, *Explanation of* [*Candrakīrti's*] *"Entrance to the Middle Way," A Lamp Illuminating Reality (Dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam bshad de kho na nyid gsal ba'i sgron ma),* (Delhi: Ngawang Topgay, 1974), 77.6–78.1.

34. Ibid., 78.1–2.

35. Michael Sweet, *Śāntideva and the Mādhyamikas: The Prajñāparamitā-Pariccheda of the Bodhicaryāvatāra* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms [University of Wisconsin diss.], 1977), 82.

36. Both the Shes-rig-bar-khang edition (Dharamsala, n.d.) of *Spyod 'jug,* p. 95 and Gyel-tsap's commentary on this, *Explanation of* [*Śāntideva's*] *"Entrance to the Bodhisattva Deeds," A Passageway for Buddha's Offspring (Spyod 'jug rnam bshad rgyal sras 'jug ngogs),* (Sarnath: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Press, 1973), 228 render this first line as *gang tshe dngos dang dngos med dag;* Gyel-tsap goes on to specify that the lack of conceptual aspect here refers to the absence of any conception of true existence. See also Sweet, *Śāntideva and the Mādhyamikas,* pp. 82ff., 296.

37. See especially Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature* (New York: Bantam Books), 97, 100–107, and idem, *Steps,* pp. 272, 317–318, 402–405. One immediately begins to think of connections between Bateson's formulation here and Buddhist uses of *apoha* theory; one important distinction between them, however, is that Bateson applies the rubric of difference to both direct and conceptual processes, whereas the Dge-lugs-pa distinction between these as complete and partial perceivers means that only the partial engagers, i.e., conceptual ones, actually proceed *by way of* difference.

38. Red-mda'-ba (*Explanation,* 79.5–6) observes that there are two types of perfections of wisdom, those with and without (dualistic) appearances *(snang ba dang bcas pa* and *snang ba med pa).* He designates only the latter as "nonconceptual" and calls it a "meditative equipoise that is free from all elaborations."

39. Red-mda'-ba, *Explanation,* 78.1–6.

40. Tsong-kha-pa, *Illumination of the Thought* (Sarnath: Ge-den Chi-lay-kang, 1973), 115.13; see also Candrakīrti, *Autocommentary on "Entrance to the Middle Way" (Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya, Madhyamakapatharabasuyanama* [sic]; *Dbu ma la 'jug pa'i rang 'grel),* (Sehore, Bhopal M.P.: The Tibetan Publishing House, 1968), 11.13; partial translation by Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Museon* 8 (1907): 249–317; 11 (1910): 271–358; and 12 (1911): 235–328.

41. Red-mda'-ba, *Explanation,* 79.5–6.

42. Translated by Jeffrey Hopkins in Tsong-ka-pa [sic], Kensur Lekden, and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1980), 132.

43. It is is interesting that Tsong-kha-pa mentions calm abiding in connec-

tion with this issue. Calm abiding is generally said to be the lowest level of stabilizing meditation with which emptiness can be realized on the seeing path. Calm abiding is easily made commensurate with analysis and insight. However, according to Geshe Gedun Lodrö, a peerless specialist in this topic, most persons attain the path of seeing using the fourth concentration (Geshe Gedun Lodrö, "Calm Abiding," unpub. ms., University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1978, p. 342) and analysis is regarded as a *fault* in relation to this level of concentration, though not in relation to the first three. Thus it may become problematic to claim that a nondualistic wisdom with the fourth concentration as its basis is yet an analytical consciousness. It would not be problematic if the analysis associated with this concentration were explictly said to be nondualistic. We can infer that this is the case from what we know about the nature of concentration (even at the level of calm abiding, the sense of subject and object is absent), but such is not clearly stated in any text I have seen to date.

44. For an elaboration of this idea, see Bateson, *Mind and Nature,* pp. 100–107, who quotes a "quasi-scientific fable that if you can get a frog to sit quietly in a saucepan of cold water, and if you then raise the temperature of the water very slowly and smoothly so that there is no moment *marked* to be the moment at which the frog should jump, he will never jump. He will get boiled" (ibid., pp. 104–105). Bateson substitutes the concept of differences for Kant's "potential facts" *(Tatsachen)*. Just as Kant observes that only a very few "potential facts" contained in an object come to affect the behavior of entities capable of responding to facts, so Bateson observes that only a very few of the infinite *potential* differences associated with an object become *effective* differences—that is, information—in the mental process of any larger entity.

45. Tara Rinboche, oral commentary on 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa's *Dbu ma chen mo,* April 1988.

46. This observation is inspired by Bateson's category of "collateral" energy, "the energy already available in the respondent, in advance of the impact of events" (*Mind and Nature,* p. 108). For example, in kicking a stone, energy is imparted to the stone and it moves with that energy alone; when I kick a dog, "it responds with energy got from metabolism." I would add that if the dog runs down the street as a result of this encounter and then gets involved with chasing its tail, that chasing (especially as time goes on) has less and less to do with the instigating kick, and more and more to do with the dog's own internal proclivities.

47. The Dge-lugs-pa contemplative and scholar Gen Lam-rim-ba, who made this observation, also noted that the term "unconditioned" *('dus ma byas, saṃskṛta)* applies only to the unchanging mental continuum of a tantric practitioner; the wisdom of the first, or the sixth, bodhisattva ground is *not* called unconditioned. Gen Lam-rim-ba, discussion, March 1988, Stanford, Calif.

48. Denma Lochö Rinbochay, quoted in Lati Rinbochay et al., *Meditative States,* pp. 177–178.

49. Tsong-kha-pa, *Illumination of the Thought,* 115.15–16.

50. Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa's works still form a major part of the curriculum at Loseling College of Drebung Monastic University. He himself studied at Sera, where Yongs-'dzin-don-yod-dpal-ltan was his teacher, and later became a Khenpo (abbot) of Loseling and Ganden Shardzay. In modern times it would be inconceivable that one man should be abbot at two different colleges, especially ones other than his alma mater (bio-data from Loling Kensur Yeshay Tupden, oral commentary, summer 1986, Washington, N.J.).

51. Red-mda'-ba, *Explanation,* 76.2ff., comments on verse VI.1d.

52. Tsong-kha-pa, *Illumination of the Thought,* 115.13ff. Adapted from an unpublished translation by Jeffrey Hopkins and Anne Klein.

53. Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, *General Meaning,* 126.6–127.1.

54. The Bhopal edition of Candrakīrti's *Autocommentary* (61.4) gives *'thob* here, whereas when this text is quoted in Tsong-kha-pa's *Illumination of the Thought,* both the Dharamsala edition (62.14) and the Sarnath edition (114.29) have *thob.* A modern edition of the root text itself, Candrakīrti's *Dbu ma la 'jug pa,* also has *thob* (Sarnath: Legs bshad gter mdzod par khang, 1978, p. 69). I doubt that any difference in tense is to be construed.

55. Candrakīrti, *Autocommentary,* 61.4–8.

56. Tsong-kha-pa, *Illumination of the Thought,* Sarnath ed., 114.14–115.1. Based on an unpublished translation by Hopkins and Klein.

57. Ibid., 115.16. The earliest post-Tsong-kha-pa Dge-lugs-pa commentator on the *Entrance,* Dge'dun grub, later known as the First Dalai Lama (1391–1475), glosses the meditative equipoise of the sixth ground as an uncommon absorption of cessation and then, unlike slightly later commentators such as Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa and Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, says no more about it. Dge'dun grub, *Mirror Thoroughly Clarifying the Treatise "Entrance to the Middle Way" (Dbu ma la 'jug pa'i bstan bcos kyi dgongs pa rab tu gsal ba'i me lon),* (n.p., n.d; block print from private collection of L. T. Doboom Tulku), 10b.3–4.

Meditative equipoise itself has historically been associated with analysis. Jang-gya, in the context of discussing the analytical reasoning by which emptiness comes to be understood, quotes Bhāvaviveka:

> With the mind in meditative equipoise
> Wisdom analyzes in this way
> The entities of these phenomena
> That are apprehended conventionally.

(translated in Jeffrey Hopkins, *Emptiness Yoga* [Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1987], 137, 376).

58. Candrakīrti, *Autocommentary,* 61.6–9. Also cited by 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, *Great Exposition of the Middle Way (Dbu ma chen mo),* (Buxaduor: Gomang, 1967), trans. Jeffrey Hopkins, unpub. ms., p. 1.

59. Pan-chen Bsod-names-grags-pa, *Response to Queries regarding [Candrakīrti's] "Entrance to the Middle Way," A Lamp Fully Illuminating the Profound Meaning (Dbu ma la 'jug ba'i brgal lan zab don yang gsal sgron me),* in *The Collected Works (Gsung 'Bum) of Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa* (Mundgod, Karnataka: Drebung Loseling Library Society, 1985; rpt., vol. 7 [vol. 27 in Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa Literature Series]), 54a.2–4. *Rang thob byed kyi 'das lam dang srid rtse'i sems la brten nas thob cing srid rtse la 'dod chags dang bral bas rab tu phye ba'i rigs su gnas pa'i mthar gnas snyoms 'jug dgu'i nang tshan du gyur pa'i ldan min 'du byed de thun mong ba'i 'gog snyoms kyi mtshan nyid.*

60. Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, *Clarifying the Difficult Points of [Tsong-kha-pa's] "Illumination of the Thought" (Dgongs ba rab gsal dka' gnad gsal bar byed pa),* 89a.6–89b.1. *Rang 'thob byed kyi thabs su gyur pa'i 'jig rten las b'as pa'i lam dang srid rtse'i dngos gzhi'i snyoms 'jug la brten nas thob cing srid rtse la 'dod chags dang bral ba'i rigs su gnas pas rab tu phye ba'i stong nyid mngon sum du rtogs pa'i ye shes.*

61. Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, *Response,* 54a.5.

62. Ibid., 52a.5ff. Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa also makes this point in his *General Meaning,* 127.4, but there adds that it is a matter "to be analyzed."

63. See, for example, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, *Great Exposition,* 102b.4, 104a.2; Candrakīrti, *Autocommentary,* 261.

64. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, *Great Exposition,* 104a.2.

65. Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, *Clarifying the Difficult Points,* 90b.2–3. *Dgag gzhi yid kyi rnam shes phra mo'i steng du dgag bya tshogs drug rags pa 'khor bcas bkag pa'i snyoms 'jug de theg pa thun mong ba'i mdo nas 'gog snyoms su bshad pas de la thun mong ba'i 'gog snyoms zhes gsungs pa yin gyi de 'gog snyoms su khas mi len pa'i phyir dper na Tik-chen las gang zag rang sgya thub pa'i rzas yod du 'dzin pa'i blo la thun mong ba'i 'jig lta shes gzungs kyang de 'jig lta yin par rang lugs la mi bzhed pa bzhin no.*

66. Blo-bzang-rta-mgrin (a.k.a. Blo-bzang-rta-dbyangs, 1867–1937), *Annotations on [Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa's] "General Meaning of Mādhyamika," A Lamp Illuminating the Profound Meaning (Dbu ma'i spyi don gyi mchan 'grel),* (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1974), 161.3–5.

67. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, *Great Exposition,* 104a.2ff. Mipham also, in his *Commentary to [Candrakīrti's] "Entrance,"* glosses Candrakīrti's term "cessation" as a "correct position free from elaborations" and, like the Dge-lugs-pa texts we have noted, distinguishes this from Hearer and Solitary Realizer assertions about cessation (1:366.3).

68. Ven. Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, October 10, 1989, San Jose, Calif.

69. Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, *Response,* 53.b6–54a.1. *Sher phyin gyi nyams len ches lhag pas zin pa'i chos nyid la mngon sum du mnyam par gzhag pa'i mnyam gzhag ye shes de.*

70. Ibid., 54a.1–2.

71. Ibid., 54a.2–3.

72. Tsong-kha-pa, *Illumination of the Thought,* 114.20–115-1; Candrakīrti, *Autocommentary,* 61.9–10. Only Tsong-kha-pa uses the epithet "fully developed" *(phul tu byung ba)* to describe the meditative equipoise or perfection of wisdom; this term appears to be a gloss on Candrakīrti's term "surpassing" *(lhag pa),* which Tsong-kha-pa also incorporates.

73. Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, *Clarifying the Difficult Points,* 89a.4.

74. Tsong-kha-pa, *Illumination of the Thought,* 114.20.

75. Loling Kensur Yeshay Tupden, oral commentary on Tsong-kha-pa's *Illumination of the Thought,* 115.12ff, spring 1980, Mundgod, India.

76. See, for example, Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, *Response,* 51a.3ff.; "whatever is an absorption of cessation is not necessarily a nonassociated compositional factor" (ibid., 52b.1; 53a.4–54a.6); see also idem, *General Meaning,* 127.6ff., where he distinguishes between subject *(yul can 'gog snyoms)* and object *(yul 'gog snyoms)* cessations; and Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, *Clarifying the Difficult Points,* 89a.3ff.

77. Asaṅga's *Compendium of Knowledge (Abhidharmasamuccaya, Mngon pa kun btus)* lists eight types of unconditioned phenomena *(bdus ma byas brgyad).* These are the three suchnesses (i.e., the actuality or *chos nyid* of phenomena distinguished as virtuous, nonvirtuous, and neutral); the two occasions when the mind is ceased, namely, during the lack of discrimination *('du shes med)* and the period of the cessation of meditative equipoise *('gog snyoms 'jug gi dus);* as well as the three unconditioned phenomena mentioned in the *Abhidharmakośa:* analytical cessation *(pratisaṃkhyanirodha, so sor brtags 'gog),* nonanalytical cessation, and space. (Lists cited in *The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary [Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo],* Chengdu: Mi rigs dpe sgrun khang, 1984, pp. 1287 and 1409.)

The middle category is, of course, problematic, insofar as consciousnesses generally are included among unconditioned phenomena. The Dge-lugs-pa

Prāsaṅgika writers would dispute this classification, but it accords with other views known to them. In this regard, see Paul Griffiths, *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1986), p. xivff., and his treatment there of absorption of cessation in the Theravāda, Vaibhāṣika, and Yogācāra traditions. Griffiths frames a tension between "knowing" and "unconsciousness," a fruitful perspective on his material, but one which does not map as well onto Dge-lugs-pa soteriology as it does onto the Theravāda and other schools he considers.

78. Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, *Response,* 51b.2; see also Griffiths, *On Being Mindless,* p. 58ff.

79. However, the absorption of cessation attained at levels lower than the sixth ground (but exclusive of the meditative equipoise associated with the first five grounds) by never-returners, arhats, or on the seeing path or peak path of preparation are said in the lower systems to be the meditative absorption at the end of the series of concentrations and absorptions, and are nonassociated compositional factors (Rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, *Clarifying the Difficult Points,* 89a.3–5). See also Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, *General Meaning,* 126.4–5.

80. An interesting historical question is why the Dge-lugs-pas chose to use the traditional term "cessation" in association with this particular state, since the very use of the term necessitates considerable clarification to distinguish it from other types of cessation, especially from the cessation that exists at the end of the series of concentrations and absorptions *(Navānupūrvavihārasamāpatti, mthar gyis gnas pa'i snyoms par 'jug pa dgu).* Partly, no doubt, it was used out of obligation to Candrakīrti, but this does not really explain the expansion of meaning. One clue may lie with the significance this category has for postulating unmediated, nondualistic, analytical cognition.

81. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, *Great Exposition,* 97b.1–3. Similarly, Nāgārjuna's *Ratnāvalī,* quoted by 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, describes the seventh as a time when "Moment by moment one can enter/The Equipoise of cessation," and the eighth as "the Immovable, the youthful stage/Through nonconceptuality one is immovable" (453–455, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins and Lati Rinbochay in *The Precious Garland and Song of the Four Mindfulnesses* [New York: Harper & Row, 1975], 86).

82. Candrakīrti, *Autocommentary,* 261.1–5.

83. Tsong-kha-pa, *Illumination of the Thought,* 442.4–13.

84. The oral commentary of Loling Kensur Yeshey Tupden also supports this interpretation, summer 1986.

85. Pan-chen Bsod-nams-grags-pa, *General Meaning,* 127.5–6. See also idem, *Response,* 51a.3–5.

86. 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, *Great Exposition,* 101b1ff.

87. Blo-bzang-rta-dbyangs, *Annotations on "General Meaning,"* 96.1–2.

88. The ten special unions of method and wisdom listed by 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa (*Great Exposition,* 100b.5ff.) are:

> (1) much meditation on the three doors of liberation, and accumulating great collections of merit; (2) meditation on selflessness, and achieving the four immeasurables, (3) achieving the six perfections, and having no adherence to them as tru[ly existent]; (4) a separation from the three realms, and achieving a continuum of that [birth in the three realms, where helpful]; (5) pacifying [one's own] afflictions, and pacifying the afflictions of all sentient beings; (6) a nondualistic consciousness [of

objects] as like illusions and so forth, and an intention for an immeasurable variety of activities and objectives; (7) meditation on a skylike pure land, and achieving the ornaments of a [pure] land; (8) meditation on the abiding state *(gnas lugs)* [i.e., emptiness] of a Conqueror's form, and achieving the signs and marks of such a body; (9) knowledge of the exalted speech of a Conqueror as naturally pacified, and achieving the sixty branches [of a buddha's] speech; (10) entering into an understanding of the sameness of the three times for a Conqueror, and entering into an understanding [of the times] as different nature [of the three times] in sentient beings' thoughts.

89. Ibid., 100a.2-4.

90. This is true even when concentration itself reveals former "conditions." It is well known that concentration, as Buddhists typically understand it, does not simply pacify concepts; at certain junctures it causes the mind to teem with memories, feelings, and visions. The Buddha's recollection of his past lives while entering the concentrations that preceded his enlightenment is perhaps the most famous example of this. Still, such memories have no power to distract, and in that sense one is unconditioned by them.

91. Mipham, *Lion's Roar,* 575.5.

92. Ibid., 575.2.

93. Ibid., 576.2.

94. Also tending toward an assessment of this experience as universal is the relationship between calming and physical sensations. Even the most neophyte meditator can attest that calming the mind a bit changes the breath. With further development, other physical sensations may follow. Tibetan and other descriptions of calming and concentration point out the physical experiences associated with various levels of quiescence. Just prior to achieving calm abiding, for example, the "head tingles" and the body feels "light, like cotton" [Lati Rinbochay et al., *Meditative States,* p. 73]. Such experiences are arguably relatively free of cultural imprinting, partly because they are not significant in most cultural contexts. The same cannot be said for expressions of this experience, whether they be actions subsequent to meditation, textual descriptions such as the above, or artistic representations associated with a particular tradition. In the words of Jorge Luis Borges, "Ecstasy does not repeat its symbols."

95. Thanks to Harvey Aronson on this point.

96. Conversation with Elizabeth Napper, February 1990, Houston, Tex.

97. One might ask how claims of a universally applicable episteme or mental dynamic differ in implication from claims for, say, a universal God. Are they equally triumphalist, for example, or does the private sphere of the former make it intrinsically less threatening to those on its margins? All universalistic claims may not be equally dangerous.

# Index

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